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WORLD CUSTOMIZE CREATOR TRANSLATION
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0. Prologue

“Truly, the balance is terrible… This game sucks.”

Spatting these words while continuing to mash the buttons on a portable game console he was walking inside the grounds of an old temple, located near his house.

This did not mean that his purpose of coming here was to visit the temple. It has become a habit of his to come here when seeking a quiet and deserted place to play games comfortably. When his mother started shouting, “You are doing nothing but playing games again!”, at him, he started looking for a peaceful place to play outside. This temple was the result of his search.

“Damn! I obtained it after all this time, yet I cannot upgrade it… Since it has come to this I will use cheats.”

Continuing to move the item, depicted in the 3D game, shown on the screen, with the cursor, he was thinking of how to use the [customization code]. It was a system, used to modify the stats of the item, obtained in an RPG game, however you liked.

While the main theme of the game was orthodox hack and slash (冒険活劇), which is pretty common nowadays, the Item – Customize – Create system played a big part in what got him into playing it.

Still, obviously broken balance and the lack of freedom made a lot of players trashtalk about this game. He turned his attention towards his bag to take out a disk for the [Customization code] for his portable gaming console, and then…

— Come, Evil God —

A voice echoed in his head. At the same time he felt that he was pulled out of his body.

“Wh- What is this?!”

Suddenly, he felt like his entire body was falling off the stairs. He was dumbfounded as he looked at his feet while unconsciously protecting his head. What he saw below him was his own body. He was looking at his own back from a place slightly above his head.

“Wow, this is an out of body experience!… No, something is strange?”

His own body, that he was looking at from above, suddenly looked around restlessly, as if something startled him. Before long, the “him” below put the gaming console in his bag, turned towards the road, and hurriedly left.

“What?… What… the… fuck… just happened…….?”

His vision started to sway like he was underwater and it slowly became dark. Within his hazy consciousness he appeared to float in a huge space, resembling a starry sky. Above, a vast universe, resembling a disk, spread over him

“The elephant and turtle… are not there…”

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This universe existed in the boundary between worlds. The radiance of the shining stars covered the heavens. One could see many different worlds from this boundary, but only the amount of stars bound the worlds together. The worlds floated alone (separately) in this gigantic, disc shaped structure.

The inhabitants of that world called it “Kaltcio” 『カルツィオ』. They built countries, prospered, declined, and perished. They gave birth to children, brought them up, and continued to live their lives in this eternally repeating history. Thousands of years are still necessary for them to break free of this world and to understand the secrets that it keeps hidden.

There was a [Will], which continued watching over the history of Kaltcio since the dawn of this world. It could be said it was an existence equal to the Gods of this world. At certain intervals it summoned a messenger from another world in order to maintain and preserve the cycle of life in Kaltcio.

A visitor from another world caused all kinds of ripples in Kaltcio that disrupted the stagnation of the world and opened new paths. Through his effort, he contributed to the cycle of this world.

Once a giant [Dragon] was summoned. Once a figure, hideous for the human eyes, a [Monster], was summoned. They had strength on par with the gods of this world and had greatly contributed to the cycle of the world.

This time again, a visitor from another world, with a power of that of the gods, has been summoned.

— Come, Evil God —

There seemed to be an infinite amount of different worlds. From these numerous worlds, a figure of a young humanoid was summoned.

— You seem to desire power —

The power he desired was an unheard, eccentric thing to those, who were summoned before him. Almost all beings that were summoned before had mighty power to destroy the opponents before them, so they desired eternal life. Even if a person desired power, to defeat his opponents, he would eventually be defeated by old age. Still, those, who desired eternal life, would eventually be broken by repeated loss of those, dear to them, and, eventually, would choose their own demise.

— You will be given the power you desire —

And so, the [Soul of the young one], torn from another world, was given a body of flesh in Kaltcio to fulfill his call.

1. Shrine of the Evil God

Ding dong
With a ring of chime in his head, Yuusuke Tagami felt his hazy consciousness clear up.

“It’s COLD!”

The air was chilly. When he tried to move his body he felt rough stone with his back and bottom. Instinctively opening his eyes, what he saw was a bright, swaying fire of the brazier that lit a room, which looked like it was made entirely from stone. After getting up and finding his body unchanged he looked around again to confirm his surroundings.

It looked like he was lying on a stone pedestal. Somehow he was completely naked. In front of the pedestal there was an altar with a pitch black statue of a being that somehow resembled a human and a monster at the same time and created a sinister atmosphere.

“What the hell is this? Is it some kind of ritual?”

Not knowing if anything was done to his body, Yuusuke, instead of feeling fear or panic, wanted to gather information and to find some clothes.

He got up from the pedestal that looked like a 1 meter height rectangle. Right near it was a small table-like stand upon which there were fruits, resembling mandarins, and a bundle made of slightly withered flowers of various colors. Besides that a fabric, resembling clothes, was lined up.

“It looks like I was an offering at the altar”, Yuusuke thought.

The small stand was surely made of stone. The surfaces of both the altar and the pedestal were worn, making them seem old.

“Is that really an offering … rather, what is that.”

Having a few doubts he finally decided that in order to find that out he has to make a few sacrifices. Thus he stretched out his hands towards the fabric that the statue of the suspicious altar held in its hands. Being naked made him more anxious than anything else right now. The moment Yuusuke touched white, slightly yellow fabric….

Ding Dong

“?!”

Startled he drew back his hand. It was a sound he heard when he awoke a little while ago. He looked over around the altar but did not see anything out of place. After looking around the stone room one more time and confirming that nothing has changed, he softly touched the fabric.

Nothing happened this time and Yuusuke, after taking the cloth into his hands, being uneasy about his surroundings, attempted to spread it out.

“It’s not a women one piece, is it?”

Aside from three holes for arms and head it was just a simple piece of cloth. It held an image of a futon sheet with holes that allowed a person to wear it as a piece of clothing.

“It can’t be a paper doll cloth…..”

After tightening it around his waist like a koshihimo (NOTE: a type of belt used to tie a kimono. It is used under the obi belt) he looked like a person from ancient times, shown in movies. After he put his clothes on, Yuusuke tried to remember what happened just before he lost consciousness.

“A dream… No it doesn’t look like it.”

Looking up at the low ceiling of the brazier lit stone room one could see a picture of round, disk shaped land abundant with oceans and mountains. The mural looked like it was taken straight out of the imagination of people of the ancient times. It gave Yuusuke a strong feeling of déjà vu.

“… What could it be…? I heard a strange voice and my body started to float … I have a feeling I’ve seen this picture before.”

The words rather than the voice. Rather than hearing the words directly, it was as if he felt them in a mysterious way. Afterwards he saw his own body stand up and leave the shrine grounds at a quick pace. The memories of what happened afterwards were hazy in his mind.

Yuusuke sighed once, stood up from the pedestal, he was using as a chair, and turned towards the exit of the stone room. Looking from behind the pedestal, in front of him there was an exit with no door, leading to a dark corridor.

Immediately after leaving the room the corridor stretched to the right. After going forward a bit it turned to the left. After that it for some reason turned to the same side again. He took a piece of wood out of the brazier and held it in front of him as a torch.

When he touched the piece of wood, the same chime rang again in his head, but, as Yuusuke got used to it by now, he did not panic.

Curiosity and feelings like uneasiness or anger did not well up inside him. Yuusuke also did not feel his mind freeze in this sudden, unnaturally mysterious situation. Deep is his heart Yuusuke sensed a feeling of acceptance.

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With her pure white hair fluttering in the wind a girl hurried along a small path to the shrine that was built in the woods, located a short distance away from the village.

Sun, you are going to the shrine, right?

“Ah, teacher Zeshald.”

An elderly man shouted to a village girl Sun, who was holding multicolored flowers and freshly picked rara (ララ) fruits. Man's name was Zeshald. He was a doctor in a nearby [Rufk] village. Although dull from age, this blue haired, blue eyed man has received divine protection from [God of water – Shalnar] and was a [divine artist] belonging to [water art users].

—Divine arts users —

Unique powers, called [divine arts] were possessed by four great gods. In this world people believed in the religion of four great gods, governing over [fire], [water], [earth], and [wind], who, supposedly, have created the world.

The majority of the people have received divine blessing and protection from the gods and, as a proof of that, had the ability to use divine arts. The law was that one person could use one divine skill and, under the effect of the blessing of the god, their hair and eyes changed color to the pure color of the god.

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Zeshald could use a divine art of Shalnar, God of water, who is the second strongest of the four great gods and is considered a God of average strength. Because he has mastered healing type water divine art he was so influential that if he lived in the society of divine arts users he would be able to lead a luxurious life. Still, he was eccentric…

"Teacher, are those new books again?"

"This time they seem to be from an old Nossentes shrine."

"That shrine as well, of course from the village of those without powers …?"

"After all it is unlikely that powerless people and the evil god have some kind of relationship."

—The powerless literally meant people that could not use any divine art and, therefore, were differentiated from the divine arts users.

Divine arts users have created a [rank system], governed by the differences in the divine arts. According to this system, people with similar abilities lived together in separate towns. Powerless people on the other hand were not allowed to enter these towns, so they banded to villages and communities.

A typical community where powerless people lived was called [a village of the powerless]. Thus in the old villages of the powerless people, spread all over the land, there were several mysterious shrines, called [shrines of the powerless]. Those, that studied those shrines, mentioned altars enshrining ominous deities. Thus the shrines have been started to be called [Evil God shrines].

In Kaltcio the [Evil God] was known as the [God of calamity] since the old times. According to the legend, it descended to Kaltcio roughly once every 300 years and brought calamities with him. This year exactly 300 years had passed since the last calamity.

However, the [last calamity] and the [god of calamity] was only a legend as there was no written information about the events 300 years ago neither about those that happened 300 more years ago. More than half of the educated people believed that this god was a superstition.

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“An Evil God?… Does it really exist?”

“Hoho, I, too, know a lot of legends about evil beast, but I do think that it exists.”

The [God of Calamity] is thought to be linked with events such natural disasters and epidemic outbreaks. Powerless people also got injured or sick, but, unlike divine arts users, they did not have any arts like the healing arts the water users had, which could immediately cure them.

Thus in case of a large scale disaster or an epidemic the powerless people took the brunt of the damage. They built the shrines for the Evil God near their villages to pray for those great disasters to avoid them. It was thought that for this reason a statue resembling an evil god was enshrined in these temples.

“In that case, for teacher to come to Rufk, the evil god should not be scary, right?”

“Hohoho, You are a good girl, Sun.”

Zeshald smiled with the corners of his eyes (a barely noticeable smile) and stroked Sun’s hair with the back of his hand. She was a girl with distinctive white eyes framed by the white hair, which was the feature of a powerless person. She lived in one of the villages of the powerless that were scattered in the area, called Rufk.

Because the strength difference between the ability users and the powerless was so desperately evident, it has become an absolute identification of social status. Depending on the country powerless people were either considered to be of low status or not even treated as humans at all.

There were no divine arts users interested in the constantly oppressed powerless people, aside from jokes and charity. Zeshald, who lived in the village of the powerless, shared the same outlook of living in the villages and freely used his divine healing arts to help them, was truly an eccentric.

Thus Sun, even if he was a divine arts using doctor, even if he was just one person, respected Zeshald.

“Then, I’m off to replace the offerings.”

“Be careful.”

Zeshald saw off Sun, who headed towards the small shrine. He then sat looking towards the Rufk village while skimming through the newly obtained books related to the [God of Calamity]. The books that he has studied until now contained the common knowledge about the Evil God: [The Evil God brought about the calamity upon the world and then disappeared].

“Hmm, the same thing is written in this book… After all the kinds of infectious diseases are noticeable, eh?”

Besides being a village doctor in Rufk, Zeshald also performed research related to the shrines of the powerless. In fact, the original reason why he started to live in the village of the powerless was so that he could study the rustic lifestyle of the people that have not received the blessing and could not use the divine arts, whose ingenuity and effort left a deep impression on him.

In the cities of divine arts users, if it was a job of crafting simple jewelry or to build a splendid house, the work was done by the divine arts users. There were almost no jobs for people that were not craftsmen. Products and structures that were the result of persons mastery in divine arts could be seen everywhere.

Yet, in the villages of the powerless, if one house needed to be built, entire village worked together to build it. From cutting the lumber and preparing the base to completing the door and the roof, the people that had the skills and experience, while teaching those who wanted learn the work, worked together to complete the building.

Zeshald, recognizing this lifestyle of the mutual support and cooperation and having obtained the said experience and skills, did not think that the small temples and old legends of the powerless carried no meaning that had to be left for the future.

“If I had to guess from the description and period of last calamity… It should be between the fifth day and the tenth day of the fire month of Shalnar. Today is the 11 day, eh?”

There was a fair amount of rumors floating around in the cities regarding the 300 year period of the calamity. But the atmosphere was calm and in no way resembled that of a preparation for upcoming calamity. One could usually hear these rumors as a small talk while drinking alcohol.

“…? There are more birds around than usual?”

Inadvertently raising his eyes at the sky above the forest Zeshald startled after sensing something resembling a divine power similar to the one that he wielded himself.

“Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

He glanced again at the flocks of birds circling around the forest, stopped his work, and started to walk towards the small shrine.

2. Black hair

With a faint sound a bundle of flowers fell down at the girl’s feet. Rara fruits followed, falling on the flowers and rolling away. In her widely opened white eyes a reflection of a man, waving his hands while muttering something, could be seen. The girl ran away, screaming, her face frozen in fear.

“Ah, wait a bit…”

Having reached the exit of the structure that housed the stone room, Yuusuke met a girl with pure white hair… and that girl ran away…screaming…

“Even though I just wanted to talk to her…?”

He felt slightly perplexed while picking up the bundle of flowers and the fruit like things that she dropped. They looked identical to the offerings in the stone room.

“So that girl came here to bring offerings, eh?”

“She didn’t mistake me with the demon that was offered this robe, did she?” thought Yuusuke after remembering the ominous statue. He was slightly worried about his looks, but, at the very least, he did not look like the human-monster statue at the altar. “Maybe I just looked like a suspicious person?”

“Uhm”

Yuusuke groaned while checking out his surroundings. It was a quiet place, surrounded by somewhat tall trees. The trees grew so dense that the forest itself became dark and the other side of the forest was not visible.

It looked like the structure with the stone room was located in a small clearing surrounded by the forest. Somehow it looked austere and carried a feeling similar to the grounds of a Shinto shrine. A small path, looking more like an animal trail, continued in between the trees in the direction that the girl ran to.

“Shall I try going there?”

After deciding that there is no point in remaining here, Yuusuke started walking down the small path. Thrown out at some unknown place by a sudden supernatural phenomenon he was currently in the middle of another abnormal situation and was unable to talk to anyone that could explain anything to him.

Because a girl, looking more like a child, has come here alone earlier, he expected that this place would not be dangerous.

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“Teacher! Teacher Zeshald!!“

“Hmm?”

Zeshald, walking on the small path towards the shrine, could not comprehend the appearance of Sun, who was running out of the forest.

She ran as if she was being pursued by someone, jumped at Zeshald, and clung to his arm. As Zeshald stroked Sun’s hair to calm her he asked if she got in trouble with ruffians from the city again.

“What happened?”

“Teacher! An Evil god… A black Evil god has walked out of the shrine!”

“… Evil god, you say?”

Thinking of what might have happened, Zeshald raised his eyes towards the path, leading into the forest, to examine the figure of the man that appeared on it.

“Black… you don’t say?”

With shaking shoulders the scared girl turned around to look and, after confirming the presence of a [person with the black hair], hid herself behind Zeshald’s back. Divine arts users, people able to use the divine arts, had their hair and pupils colored after the God that they have received their blessing from.

The [fire arts users] had received the blessings of the Fire god Volnar and carried the red color.

The [water arts users] had received the blessings of the Water god Shalnar and carried the blue color.

The [earth arts users] had received the blessings of the Earth god Zalnar and carried the yellow color.

The [wind arts users] had received the blessings of the Wind god Fyolnar and carried the green color.

The [powerless] that have not received the blessing from any of the four great Gods carried the white color. The [black] was the color of [calamity] used to portray the Evil god. Therefore the Evil god statues in the shrines of the powerless were consequently painted black and there might have been those that wanted to partly undertake that image.

At least Zeshald has not seen a person with black hair or pupils once during his long 52 years, including over 30 years that he has spent traveling around various countries, researching the Evil god.

Activating the divine art that he possessed, Zeshald walked slightly forward in order to protect sun from the person with the black hair.

“You, Who are you?”

Yuusuke hesitated how to answer the alert looking elderly person, protecting the girl from before behind his back and, without a trace of fear on his face, asked him to identify himself. He showed no hostility but it was hard to say if he was a friend.

“Uhmmm, my name is Tagami Yuusuke, I’m a Japanese. Say, do you even understand what I am saying?”

“Yes, we are both speaking the same language. Your name is [Tagami Yuusuke], right? And [Japanese], is that the name of your tribe?”

The man, who questioned Yuusuke and spoke the same language, seemed to prefer communication over force. After explaining the name of “Japan”, Yuusuke talked about the mysterious things that have happened to his body.

He talked about the call of the [voice], followed by appearing in a completely unknown place and recovering his consciousness in the temple afterwards. Yuusuke voiced his worry that, if a normal person (NOTE: most likely a normal person in present day Japan) would to hear this, he would think of Yuusuke as a delusional madman – none of that brought smile on Zeshald’s face.

[“Tagami Yuusuke… a man that appeared from the shrine of the Godless might actually be the Evil god himself. Even more so he says that he has been called from another world“]

“Your story is very interesting indeed, but the Evil god…”

“Ah, I lived amongst normal humans”

“Mm, but you were even called the Evil god?”

“No! That is … Only the voice said THAT. I am really just a normal person”

Sun was hiding behind old man’s back during the entire conversation between Yuusuke and Zeshald.

“Then, did you really bring the calamity upon this world?”

“Rather, I want to say that I am the one that has experienced the calamity…”

After hearing Yuusuke’s story and deciding that he is not a dangerous person, Zeshald decided to accompany the young man until the Rufk village. Sun was visibly pale and her head was shaking thus Zeshald had convinced her by saying “This man is not dangerous” and persuaded her to return the village ahead of them.

While walking on the country road back to the village, they talked about why Yuusuke was called an Evil god and why Zeshald thought he could bring about a calamity. Despite talking all the way the discussion yielded more questions than answers.

“There are illnesses, we can’t cure. If the contagion spreads we call it a calamity”

“You seem to be perfectly healthy“

Normally unsociable Yuusuke has found an unusual subject of interest and has opened his heart while discussing it with Zeshald. His partner, after all, was a friendly and reasonable old fellow which gave Yuusuke a sense of security.

Zeshald openheartedly talked with Yuusuke, who, despite being thrown alone into an unfamiliar land, was not at loss and acted calm from the beginning, on the outside, but on the inside he was careful as to not get carried away and lower his guard.

“Still, these clothes… can you do something to make them look longer?”

Yuusuke sighed from the embarrassment of looking like a person from ancient times while wearing the clothes that were left as an offering. As for (looking at) Zeshald’s clothes, he was wearing loose fitting pants, made from thick cloth that were tucked into brown boots. Above waist he was wearing comfortable looking white shirt covered by a cloak that looked more like a mantle.

The clothes looked like those that a noble from the medieval ages would wear in western countries yet they felt [ordinary]. Walking behind such man while dressed as a person from the ancient times felt somewhat embarrassing indeed.

“If I could at least wear ordinary pants and a shirt…”

Yuusuke said that as he was gripping his clothes, but then he suddenly stopped. After sensing that Zeshald, who was walking 2-3 steps ahead of Yuusuke, turned around. After seeing the youth standing dumbfounded and staring at something Zeshald became even more wary.

“What happened?”

“I… Am I dreaming…”

“Hoho, then are we the people, living inside your dream?”

Yuusuke calmly received Zeshald’s candid reply as he continued to stare dumbfounded at something in front of him. Or, to be more precise, it was an image. In front of his eyes was a wireframe image that contained a menu with a simple layout.

It was the [Item Creation – Customization System] menu – a special feature of the game, he was playing just before being called by the mysterious voice. In the customization window Yuusuke saw a spinning 3d model of the garment he was now wearing.

Then Yuusuke recalled something.

“Oh, that’s it! The chime back then was the sound you heard when you touched a customizable item in that game”

Zeshald tilted his head while watching Yuusuke talking to himself.

“Hmm I can’t understand half of what you’re saying. Have you remembered something?“

“Ah, please give me a moment”

While looking at the bewildered Zeshald, Yuusuke processed the item in the menu, he alone could see.

He roughly customized the color and shape of the clothes. There were other sliders for abilities and parameters of the item, but Yuusuke operated only the necessary sliders. One by one, almost identically to that game, he could fine-tune every property of the item.

[“There are no customization points, does that mean I can tamper with the item as much as I want? Isn’t this cheating?”]

With his eyes focused on something invisible, mumbling unknown words while moving his finger in the air, Yuusuke looked very suspicious, still, Zeshald felt a power resembling that of a divine art, emanating from the young man.

“What are you doing, Tagami Yuusuke?”

Because the offered clothes had plenty of cloth, Yuusuke has split them into a shirt and a pair of pants and then changed their form respectively. In the game players could remodel clothing, sold by the NPC, the way they liked and could have their characters wear it.

Incidentally he also made some underwear. Being unable to decide on the position (NOTE: i guess item equip slot for underwear) he couldn’t settle down.

“Ok, this should do it. …… Execute!”

Being engrossed in the customization screen, Yuusuke, afraid this was just a dream, hesitated for a moment, but, having decided that waking up if nothing happens wouldn’t be such a bad thing, he pressed the “Execute” button on the screen.

Yuusuke got surrounded by a warm light.

“?!”

“Hey, You! …”

The offered cloth transformed to a gray shirt, a pair of black pants, and green briefs.

“Kyaaaaaaa!!”

Girl’s shriek resounded the moment the light disappeared. Sun, with her white hair fluttering in the wind, ran away while covering her face, red from the shame. The moment that light enveloped Yuusuke, Sun, being worried, came back to look for Zeshald. She was staring at the light looking for the symbol of the Evil god…

“Ah….”

“She ran away screaming again”, sighed Yuusuke, standing in the middle of the county road, surrounded by abundant greenery.

“Ah, right. If you customize the equipment, you are wearing, it gets unequipped in the process. Hahahaha…”

Zeshald, having witnessed power on par with divine arts, asked Yuusuke, who, laughing an emotionless laugh, was slowly gathering the scattered clothes from the ground… In the meantime Sun was running back to the village.

“What was it just now? I haven’t heard of a divine art that allows you to instantaneously remodel clothes”

“Divine art?”

Zeshald was now even more convinced that the youth, who has turned his head sideways in confusion, was not a person of this world. He has intended to only lead him to the village, but, after talking with him about the customs of this world, he decided to allow him to calm down in the village and then listen to his story in detail.

“Hmm, what should I teach you first?”

3. Life in Rufk Village

“That’s Rufk village”

Zeshald pointed down the road where wooden shacks were lined up in a chaotic way. It was a reasonably sized village that had around 240 villagers living in 60 houses. On the other side of the village huge plains stretched to the horizon.

“The powerless live there, right?”

“Yeah. Maybe I didn’t tell you earlier, but I am a user of water divine arts and also a doctor in this village”

“Not being the ruler of the village, talking to and teaching the powerless people, not to mention living with them, was very uncommon”, on their way to the village Zeshald once again explained to Yuusuke about the depth of the difference between divine arts users and powerless people.

The majority of people have received divine protection from the Four Great Gods, who have created the world. These people called themselves divine arts users and could use abilities, called divine arts. Those with power ruled over this land, and that rule extended to every corner of the world.

People that could not use the divine arts were in the minority and were seen as little more than cattle.

“How cruel can you be to view people as cattle?”

“It’s because of the difference in power between them”

With the divinity of the Four as the main system ruling this world, the divine arts users had their social status clearly distinguished by their abilities. They even decided on the restrictions on who could live in the same city. Fire users were considered high status divine arts users and held the highest social position in

this world, water and earth arts users were the middle class while the wind users belonged to the lowest class.

“Basically it’s a system where those with the strongest military power reign over the rest”

“I see”

Although common sense of Kaltcio was still a mystery to Yuusuke, thanks to the Zeshald’s lecture, he at least managed to smoothly remember everything he was taught about the social structure of this world.

“Since you now have a rough understanding of it, you will be able to learn the rest while living with us”

“Thank you for everything”

Thus Yuusuke, being suddenly called out to this world, has discovered that he was given a power to customize things he touched. As Yuusuke still could not tell left from right in this world, he was currently living in Zeshald’s house under his care.

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The village was surrounded by a trench that seemed to be about 1 meter wide and 1 meter deep which was dug up to protect the grain warehouse from the wild animals. At the entrance to the village a log bridge was built over the trench.

Because there were no dangerous animals or evil beast species in this region, villages tended to surround themselves with moats instead of building a wall. Moreover branches from a special kind of tree, containing flammable resins, were laid on the bottom of the trench. In time of need it could be ignited to create a wall of fire.

Rufk villagers lived by hunting, fishing in the nearby river, and gathering fruits from the trees in the forest. Sometimes they traded their crop with the neighboring village and sold the fur and wool, gathered from the livestock, in the big city which was the capital of this region.

The villagers who saw Yuusuke were not used to the black hair of his and were visibly startled the moment they saw him. That said, none of the visitors that came to Zeshald’s place caused any problems and their expression softened after a few moments. This clearly showed Yuusuke how highly Zeshald was regarded in the village.

“Teacher Zeshald… and the evil god guy…”

“I’m Tagami Yuusuke”

Sun came home and, after seeing Yuusuke immediately hid herself behind the door. She worked as a maid in Zeshald’s house and, despite being openly cautious of Yuusuke, had prepared the guest room.

“Haha if he is really that scary, then why did you work here today?”

“I didn’t have anything else to do~”

For the time being Zeshald asked sun to prepare a water basin. Since Yuusuke came all the way here barefooted, his feet were covered by scratches. Zeshald planned to wash the dirt of Yuusuke’s feet and then heal them.

“I will give you my shoes, although they might not fit you”

“I think I can change their size so it will not be a problem”

Yuusuke sat at the chair that was offered for him and inspected the soles of his feet. There were some traces of dirt and small pebbles. Although there were no blisters, he saw some bruises. [“Ouch~”] he thought. In the meantime Sun returned with the water.

“Ah, … thank you”

“……“

Sun, whose white hair was tied on the back, looked to be quite muscular for her slender build. She put the basin and the wooden bucket with water at Yuusuke’s feet and coyly started washing Yuusuke’s feet.

Feeling like he was in a scene of a television show or a movie, Yuusuke, startled, drew back his legs. After rethinking on the common knowledge of this world he understood that drawing back one’s legs here might have seemed rude.

Slightly ashamed he endured the tickling feeling. For a while only the sound of the water could be heard.

“I’m done, Teacher”

After washing Yuusuke’s feet and reporting it to Zeshald, Sun took the basin, filled with dirty water, and the wooden bucket and went outside to dispose of the water. At the same time Zeshald has come out of the inner room where he left his luggage and prepared a pair of boots.

“Umm, let me see”

He put the slightly dusty pair of brown boots aside and inspected the state of Yuusuke’s feet. Then, by merely concentrating a bit, he healed the small wounds and made the bruises on Yuusuke’s legs disappear.

“How does it feel?”

“Amazing, you healed them completely!”

The prickling pain he felt has also completely disappeared. After inspecting the soles of his feet again Yuusuke found them to be beautiful and smooth. Yuusuke could only admire the power of healing divine arts which looked like magic to him.

“I see that divine arts are effective on you”

“Ah, it seems so. So there was a possibility that they would not work?”

Zeshald nodded intelligently to Yuusuke’s question. In his mind Zeshald was relieved that the divine arts of this world could interfere with Yuusuke. This way, if Yuusuke proved to be Evil god, the divine arts users would be able to fight him.

[“Well, he does not look like a dangerous man”]

With Zeshald’s thoughts being concentrated somewhere else, Yuusuke touched the boots and, after confirming chime sound, immediately started customizing them.

***

Carrying a bundle of field flowers and a basket of rara fruits she was walking alongside her father at a steady pace. From time to time she looked at her father and asked a question, to which he answered while smiling. They were bringing the offering to the temple as usual, then, suddenly, her father stopped.

Thinking of what may have happened, she looked towards the road and saw a green haired man standing alongside a yellow haired man.

Divine art users! The instant she thought that her father pushed her away into the thicket that grew alongside road. She fell down and the flowers scattered in the air, creating a red cloud. The first thing she saw after getting out of the bushes was her father's body, lying in a pool of blood.

When she yelled her father's name and started rushing towards him, the ground below her feet rose suddenly and she was attacked by the soil. She understood what happened and started struggling frantically, but she was hit into stomach by a cold, blunt thing which was soon followed by a burning pain.

Both divine arts users were laughing. The strength left her body, she could see something red flowing out of her abdomen as she understood ["ah, I'm dying"]. Suddenly the soil, that she was trapped in crumbled. Her body fell down as it had no strength left.

On the road she could see a blue haired person running towards her. She knew that person. He was a divine arts user. However, that person was …

"……!"

Dazzling morning sun and chirping melody of small birds have erased the lingering thoughts of a bad dream of the past. Sun rose abruptly after releasing a sigh of relief. It was a nightmare of the past that she has not seen for a long time.

"It's definitely because of the evil god"

After sighing again Sun got out of the bed.

***

"Good morning teacher! … and Yusuke…"

"Mmm, Good morning, Sun"

"Morning~"

When Sun arrived at the dining room, a series of fabrics, clothes, and shoes, Zeshald and Yuusuke were shuffling through, were lined up on the table. "You might be able to disguise as a tailor", suggested Zeshald, to which Yuusuke replied with "You might be right".

"Ok, Execute"

After playing around with his finger in the air Yuusuke said those words and seemed to push something. Fabrics and a pair of old boots, scattered on the table, were enveloped in light and changed into clothes of elaborate design and brand new pair of lacquered boots, which only divine arts users could make.

Yuusuke, who said to be from another world, carried the divine arts of the Evil god. He called his power “Customization – Creation”.

After feeling someone looking at him, Yuusuke suddenly raised his head and his eyes met with Sun’s. At that instant Sun hurriedly left the room. Since few days have passed since Yuusuke came to this word and since he got familiar with the life in this village, Yuusuke sometimes held small talks with the villagers. Yet, sadly he could not yet reach Sun’s heart.

Yuusuke sighed. Zeshald, after confirming that Sun has indeed left the house, broke the silence.

“Please don’t blame her. That child is burdened with an ominous past”

After saying that he closed one eye and put his index finger to his lips while saying “It’s a secret”. Afterwards he told Yuusuke about the trauma, Sun has experienced in her childhood

***

“Oh, Sun, is it alright to skip going to the teachers place today”

“Aunt Bahana… Uhm, teacher looked busy researching Yuusuke’s divine arts…”

Sun replied to the gentle voice of her neighbor, while on her way to the forest to harvest fruits. Aunt Bahana was a beautiful young woman who was a neighbor of sun when she lived with her father. She knew Sun since she was a child and often worried about her future.

Bahana has also lost her husband recently. While officially it was said to be an accident during the hunt, she knew that he was actually killed by divine arts user just for the fun of it. Because of this she could understand the pain that Sun was feeling after losing her father on the whim of divine arts users – Sun had a trauma related to the young male divine arts users.

“You still didn’t get used to him?”

“… … I understand that he is a good person, but … I just can’t help but fear him”

Sun understood that the attitude and feelings she showed towards Yuusuke were her problem, however, the fear of the ability users, engraved in her childhood, could not be easily erased even if Zeshald told her that Yuusuke did not seem to be a divine arts user.

Still, that power looked like divine arts to Sun. Thus to Sun he was a divine arts user from another world that has appeared in a shrine of the Evil god. In this world he was called an Evil god and the Powerless were sometimes ridiculed as Evil god divine arts users. (NOTE: last sentence of this paragraph sounds way too random..)

“Hey, don’t be in such a rush! Why don’t you try talking with him just a little?”

“Uhm…“

Sun got herself to greet him in the morning. If she continues on she might get to the point where she can act normally around him.

[“Next time, I might try asking him about the flavor of the food“]

***

While Sun was gathering fruits in the forest and chatting with her neighbor, in Zeshald's house, Yuusuke groaned, listening to the girls past as it was told by the old man. Even if he understood the common knowledge of this world, relationship between the divine arts users and the powerless did not sit well with him.

"What happened to those two?"

"I killed one of them, but the wind user managed to get away"

Even now I can hear stories in the village about the time when there was no divine art user who was supposed to watch several villages of the Powerless in the area.

There were cases where the powerless, who had no lord to watch over them, were treated as wild animals. There were cases like Sun's in between the young divine arts users, who have just obtained their power and wanted to test in onto those with no protection for the sake of testing out their power or purely for their enjoyment.

The young divine arts users that attacked Sun and her father, upon seeing Zeshald, rushing their way, assumed that they have damaged his property without his approval.

While water arts user Zeshald belonged to the same hierarchical level as the earth arts user, it was assumed that, between the God of earth Zalnar and the God of water Shalnar, the latter was stronger and thus the water arts users had higher social standing than their earth arts counterparts. Meanwhile, wind art users belonged to the lowest social caste of the divine arts users.

When killing of the property of the divine arts user of a higher social standing was concerned, the decision at the divine arts users' trial was clear. Theft warranted capital punishment and court, on top of seizing the assets, could strip the accused of his social status and turn him into a slave. Threatened by these consequences the two attempted to kill Zeshald.

Despite Zeshald's divine arts belonging to the healing type, his mastery of the arts allowed him to reverse the effect and use it to damage the flesh.

"While I needed a bit of time to strangle the blood vessels of the earth arts user, the wind arts user, known for his extreme mobility and ability to transmit information, managed to escape"

"The way you describe it is scary…"

Yuusuke was angry while listening to the cruel story. He was feeling that he could not tolerate groups of such people no matter which world he came from.

"Were there any groups of such people in the world you came from?"

"Well, there were some odd fellows, but no one would even think about treating another human as an animal"

Even thou there were some extreme cases, the world Yuusuke talked about tended to hold respect towards human rights and these rights were respected in almost every country. After hearing this Zeshald nodded, saying "It's a good place" with his face full of various emotions.

***

“It became quite a long talk”

After shuffling through the luggage, lying on the table, for a short while, Zeshald started to separate things he wanted to sell in the city. Yuusuke, who helped Zeshald to pack up, dropped a green object from the opening of a sturdy bag, lying on the chair.

The thing that fell under the chair was a long cylinder. Wondering what it might be Yuusuke picked the cylinder up.

Ding dong.

It was a crystal-like transparent object. Crystal’s length was about the same as Yuusuke’s index finger and its thickness was around 3mm. It looked similar to a hexagon pencil that was flat at the both ends.

“Mhm? aaah it’s a shouka [sparkling crystal]. This bag is my purse”

[Shouka] was the name for the currency, made from a very hard cylinder shaped substance. Shouka was used throughout Kaltcio and was created by the combined efforts of fire and earth divine arts users. It was said to be produced by condensing light, thou the exact manufacturing process was kept secret.

Capital of this country and also the biggest city in Kaltcio was called Sanc Adiet. The minting of shouka there was overseen by a reigning family of fire arts users, also known as nobility of this city.

There were four kinds of shouka, named after the Four (great gods), which value was determined by the color of the crystal – one red Volnar shouka was worth 5 blue Shalnar shoukas, 10 yellow Zalnar shoukas, or 30 green Fyolnar shoukas.

“It sounds complex…”

“Hohoho, you should remember this well in the future”

Yuusuke took a transparent Fyolnar shouka and held it against the light. When he touched the crystal he heard the usual chime thus thinking [“I should be able to tamper with it, right”] Yuusuke opened the customization menu.

Yuusuke then took the only Volnar shouka out of the purse and, after comparing it’s parameters with the Fyolnar shouka, decided that, aside from a single parameter, the remainder of their structure was identical.

However shoukas of the same kind still had subtle differences in their parameters therefore he might be allowed a certain degree of error. This meant that there was no precision instrument used in the manufacturing process.

“… Execute”

The Fyolnar crystal, Yuusuke held in his hands, was enveloped by light. After the light has conceded, what Yuusuke held was a translucent Volnar shouka.

“Hey, wait a second!”

with a loud sound Zeshald stood up from his chair and hurriedly looked around. There was no one in the room aside from Zeshald and Yuusuke. Meanwhile Yuusuke hid the customized Volnar shouka asking “Did I do something bad?”.

The customized shouka was indeed genuine. One could not tell the forged one apart from the usual one, created by high ranking fire and earth divine arts users. The appraisal skills of earth divine arts users could not be deceived, still, this did not seem to be a fluke and was indeed a genuine Volnar crystal.

“… Ok, Yuusuke~ Don’t tell or show anyone what you did just now. By the way, I have 8 more Fyolnar crystals over here~~~”

It was early afternoon and 8 Fyolnar crystals have mysteriously disappeared from Zeshald’s purse, incidentally the amount of Volnar crystals have increased by the same amount.

How it happened was indeed a mystery.

4. Sanc Adiet

Widest plains on Kaltcio, the Fonclanc plains, or, to be precise, one fifth of these plains were occupied by a gigantic city of Sanc Adiet. The city was controlled by the strongest fire divine arts users who, over the ages, became royalty. For generations this city was the capital of the country.

The city functioned under a caste system and every citizen knew the limits of his caste – those with stronger divine arts were allowed to live in the quarters in the upper districts of the city as to boast of their power. The palace, where the royalty lived, was a 10 floor building. Its structure and walls below the 5th floor were reinforced with the divine arts.

The central district that was limited to the powerful divine arts users [the highborn] was surrounded by a huge defensive wall. Thus, having no place to expand, inhabitants built taller and taller buildings to accommodate themselves. Behind these walls the middleclass district surrounded the highborn section, followed by the district of the lowest class.

The middleclass district, just like the highborn district, was distinguished by the structures that were higher than the ones of the lowest class district as to overlook the area below. The lowest class district was also situated higher than the ground – as the city expanded, stone pavement was laid out to accommodate new structures.

Basically, the buildings got higher towards the center of the city and, after a period of reckless development, the city took an oval shape when looked at from above. On the city outskirts there was a district for the powerless who were exceptionally allowed to live there. From the perspective of the powerless caste, that in itself was a blessing.

On the summit of the highborn district stood the Volance palace. The palace was rebuilt along with the city each time becoming higher and higher. The current palace retained no architecture of the old times, which was now buried underneath the stone pavement and looked like some sort of underground labyrinth.

The wall and roofs, neighboring the top floor of the palace, were adorned with the same light absorbing material that was used in the production of shouka, enveloping the palace in radiance.

In a room on the top floor of this palace, a bored looking girl, wearing a high class red dress, was sitting with her legs thrown back on a couch, made by a highly skilled divine arts artisan. She threw a book, she was skimming through, on the table.

“Boring~. I AM BORED!”

“Princess, you are being improper.”

Rebuked aide of the personal bodyguard and education department, to whom such behavior of this immodest young princess, outrageously crossing her hands behind her head and rocking back and forth while sitting cross-legged on the chair, was a problem he worried about every day.

“Stop it! A lady cannot behave like this!”

“Not like anyone cares, no one can see me here either.”

Personal aide Krielov walked up to the princess of the divine fire arts users, Violet Volance, who was rocking in the chair being bored out of her mind, and held the back of the seat before the princess fell down.

“Mhmmmm~”

“No Mhms! You should act more like the royalty.”

“Grand and glorious shining example, standing at the top of divine fire arts users”, Violet, who was scolded as usual, muttered boredly while playing with her nail and ignoring the preaching:

“Father and the bureaucrats that surround him are all black inside, quite like the statue of the Evil god.”

“The statue of the evil god?”

“The black statue enshrined in the powerless shrines.”

“Princess, you should not speak of noble descendants of the fire god as those of such low birth.”

As she was started to be scolded again, Violet rested her bored face by placing her chin on her hand and said something that caused even more wrinkles to appear on Krielov’s forehead.

“I want to meet Zeshald.”

“……”

Glancing at frowning Krielov, Violet purposely mentioned Zeshald. Zeshald has not visited the palace for several years, but, when Violet was an infant, he used to play with her.

“You should not mention that weirdo.”

“Why shouldn’t I? I heard that Zeshald’s mastery of divine water arts outperforms even the elite of the palace, the [Water god corps].”

Beside [Divine soldier corps], soldiers tasked by the palace to defend and patrol the city, there was an elite group, responsible for tasks related with palace officials. [Water god corps] was an elite group, comprised of elites of the divine healing type water arts. Incidentally Krielov was the commanding officer of the [Fire god corps] – an elite group of fire arts users, responsible for the safety of the royalty.

“Princess, hearing you speak such things people might misunderstand it for favoritism. That will only cause trouble for him.”

“Ugh… Zeshald is not that weak of a person.”

Replied Violet, forming her lips into a sulking expression.

***

“Teacher is leaving for the city? Is he going along?”

“Yes, Yuusuke will also be going with teacher. They will be out for 3 days.”

Sun was at Bahana’s house with a basket full of rara fruits. While exchanging the fruit for some dried meat they were having a small talk.

The fruits that Sun brought were customized by Yuusuke and had a special flavor. Also they were not soft as ripe rara fruits so one could feel the soft texture when eating them. That made them extremely popular amongst the villagers.

“Is that so? Then go home, it’s nearly dinnertime.”

“Mmm, thank you.”

Bahama treated Sun as her own daughter. Seeing the girl act as usual aunt Bahana sighed inside: “It seems this child is still ways off from talking about romance”.

***

“Yes, it’s comfortable.”

Due to Yuusuke’s customization riding a wagon on the main road to the city was pleasant. If you went directly through the main road by the wagon, it took an entire day to get to Sanc Adiet from Rufk village.

By leaving early in the morning it was possible to arrive to the capital late in the evening. Before the road, stretching into the horizon, a growing beige city skyline could be seen.

“At first I thought that there was a mountain on the horizon.”

“Hoho, well there isn’t much of a difference.”

Zeshald, sitting on the driver’s seat, was explaining to Yuusuke, who was riding in the back of the wagon, about Sanc Adiet. The city expanded when its population increased. To be able to see every nook of the city the king has raised the elevation of the highborn district forming the shape that the city had now.

“Then, is the old city is buried beneath the current city?”

“Hmmmm~”

Yuusuke having showed interest in history, Zeshald nodded happily to a remark of a person, sharing his interests.

Horse was running tirelessly thanks to Zeshald's water arts. This improved the traveling comfort and maneuverability of the wagon up to that of an average high class carriage. Yuusuke and Zeshald were able to travel almost without any rest and arrived to the city ahead of their schedule.

"Uhm, street (stall) market might still be open. Do you want to go for a short walk?"

After parking the wagon on an empty spot they employed a local powerless to guard it. Powerless here usually earned their coin by guarding horses or wagons of traders that came to the city. Powerless considered it an honor to be allowed to live in the vicinities of the city.

"Eeeeh! M-mister, WHAT is that?"

"AH, sorry, but currently I only have these on me."

"……"

Zeshald shrugged his shoulders towards a local powerless, confused that the yellow shouka he was given, was not a mistake.

For the wagon guard duty a single green shouka alone was enough of a compensation, yet, because all the green shoukas that Zeshald had in his purse had changed to the red ones, the smallest amount of money Zeshald had was a yellow Zalnar shouka. Having received more than thrice his usual play, the local powerless, screaming from joy, assumed his guard duties.

"His scream was quite something, eh?"

"That's because for them it is quite a lot of money."

Zeshald answered Yuusuke, who was glimpsing [at the local] from under the hood that fell low enough to hide his eyes. The hooded cloak was prepared to cover Yuusuke's hair because dying ones hair or using a wig of different color was a taboo in this society.

Divine arts users, being able to feel the power of another user were able to use this for discrimination. Yuusuke, whose power carried a different feeling (atmosphere) around him, considered his choices to avoid the uncomfortable gazes from other people. Being near Zeshald and pretending to be his apprentice was both, convenient and simple idea.

In the evening Zeshald and Yuusuke went out to walk around the city to search around for some things they had to buy at the stalls of the central street. The street stall market was a famous aspect of the lower district. Adding to the size of Sanc Adiet, one could find every kind of item you could imagine in this market. It was a place where businesses of scores of people flourished every day.

In the lower district citizens were allowed to keep the stalls up until sunset for free. However, if they wanted to set up their shop in the middle class or highborn district they were required to purchase a store permit.

Arriving at the highborn district, almost all of the clothes and adornments were custom made. Even entering a restaurant without formal attire was not permitted.

“Will you sell your wares here?”

“Yeah, an acquaintance of mine has a shop further up the road. He was interested in it after hearing about you.”

Tomorrow morning after securing the stall the two planned to sell shoes, clothes, and animal products, such as wool. After obtaining the money they thought about buying the everyday commodities and heading back to the village.

Zeshald who was looking for a pottery stall to replace a plate, Sun broke some time ago, suddenly sensing a presence of a powerful divine arts user looked to the other side of the street.

“Is something wrong?”

“Mhm…”

Yuusuke also stopped and looked the same way. Suddenly the crowd parted and a group of people, wearing brightly decorated armor, appeared. They were [Divine soldiers], that he saw several times near the city gates. It was a proud group, tasked with protecting public order and had a unique atmosphere around them.

“What is that?”

“A member of royalty with his retainers has come down incognito from the palace.”

“Incognito?”

“The procession stands out so much, I don’t understand what [“incognito”] means here.” – Yuusuke replied ignorantly. After hearing Yuusuke’s comment Zeshald nodded, saying “I see” and explained Yuusuke what “traveling incognito” meant in this world.

Divine arts users could feel the presence of other divine arts users. Since some time ago royalty have used their powers throughout the kingdom during events and festivals, thus everyone in this city knew the aura that they carried. Thus if one would disguise himself and come down into the city, he would be detected immediately.

While it was possible for palace officials or someone not so well known to travel according to Yuusuke’s understanding of “incognito”, for the royalty, who used their power to command respect from the lower classes, hiding their presence like that was impossible.

For that reason it has become a norm for royal family to be surrounded by palace soldiers when they wanted to travel “incognito” to sightsee, have fun, or check the wellbeing or obedience of the common divine arts users.

“Well, royalty rarely goes down to the city… ….. This is bad!”

While Zeshald was telling Yuusuke this, his face suddenly became worried as he recognized something. He looked to Yuusuke and said:

“We have to leave this place quickly”

“Wh- what? What’s with all the urgency?”

***

“Princess, it’s about time we returned to the palace.”

“You are saying boring things again. Look, the city is still busy.”

Violet, walking ‘incognito’ around the city, accompanied by her close aid and several retainers, was looking around the stalls lined along the central street. While looking around for interesting trinkets for the lower classes she suddenly felt a nostalgic aura. Stopping instantly she looked around.

“That is… !”

Violet broke out of the circle her aide and retainers have formed around her, confusing them by her sudden halt, and disappeared into the crowd. Her aide, Krielov, was momentarily befuddled by her sudden action but soon regained his composure and rushed after the princess.

“Found you, Zeshald!”

“Ugh…”

“Whoa, what!”

Yuusuke, who was hurriedly trying to leave this place as he was urged by Zeshald to get away from the street, was surprised by a young girl that suddenly tackled Zeshald on the waist. She looked to be strong willed, had her red hair bound into twin tails, and wore an expensive, open, crimson dress.

“Princess, please be gentler with the elderly.”

“You are saying that yet you are always out wandering somewhere around the world.”

Attendant Krielov of the [Fire gods corps], having finally caught up to the princess, recognized Zeshald and set a cold face.

Krielov did not like Zeshald. Currently ruling Esvobus Volance, the admired [Crimson wall king], which Krielov serves, was a good friend of Zeshald, but currently, because of the circumstances, their relationship was complicated.

“Do not involve yourselves with Zeshald.”, said king Esvobus, seeming like he was not telling something.

For king Esvobus, a fire art user of great strength, to show favoritism like that made his faithful retainers, including Krielov, harbor displeasure towards Zeshald. Thinking “Might it be that Zeshald is some sort of weakness of the king?” Krielov asked the princess to “Return to the palace” while politely excusing himself. Soldiers of Fire god corps, guessing the intent of their commanding officer, surrounded the princess with a guard ring as per their duty.

“Isn’t it sunset already? Your father will get worried if you do not return to the palace soon.”

Violet, dissatisfied because she was being treated as granddaughter by Zeshald, suddenly coquettishly changed her facial expression, puffed her cheeks while putting her hands at her hips, got even closer to the old man, and pointed her finger toward his chest.

“I am not a child anymore. You should also know that…”

“Well then what is the secret of why this senile old man has caught her highness’ interest?”

“!! Princess, behavior as such is..!“

In addition to lightly brushing off her close aide’s thoughts, Princess Violet, after her seduction attempt failed completely, once again puffed her cheeks with all her might.

“Che, it seems I don’t have enough sex appeal.”

“It’s because the one you are trying to seduce this time is a weak old man…”

Zeshald sheepishly replied to groaning Violet. As Krielov lost his patience and the soldiers of fire god corps silently performed their duty, Yuusuke, being ignored as a total outsider, was standing aside and staring at the soldiers while thinking – “What a tomboyish princess”.

“You, you give off a strange aura.”

“Wha-?”

Yuusuke, dumbfounded by being spoken to so suddenly, released a strange sound from his mouth. Turning his head back, before his eyes Yuusuke saw a self-confident lady with a well-featured face, and beaming red eyes, full of determination. The princess was walking towards him.

Violet, recognizing an existence that did not immediately separate from Zeshald upon seeing these events, took an interest in the face of the person that emitted the aura of an unknown divine arts that she has never felt before. Luckily her advance was promptly interrupted by Zeshald.

“He is a shy person, if the princess continues to stare at him like that, he will collapse from the stress.”

“… Hmm.”

Violet squinted her eyes, not the very least interested in Zeshald’s protective behavior, compared to the mysterious aura of the hooded divine arts user, snorted, and obediently withdrawn. Seemingly posing she snapped her fingers towards the two.

At that moment, after emitting a crackling sound (a sound of burning), Yuusuke’s hood started to burn.

“WHAAAAAT?!”

“Ugh! This is bad.”

“Ahahahaha~”

Even thou the flame were quickly doused by Zeshald’s water arts, the bystanders were alerted by Violet’s usage of the divine arts. The princess, who was laughing out loud, was urged to behave by Krielov, who rushed to her side.

“Princess! Please behave yourself. Royalty’s sacred divine arts should not be recklessly used in front of the people of lower castes like this!”

“Leave me alone!”

Yuusuke, almost having his head burnt, interfered in the admonition of the close aid of the reckless tomboyish princess. Interference in a conversation between a royal princess and her close aid was something that was even impossible to conceive for the ability users of the lower castes. This again ignited the princess' interest in Yuusuke as she looked towards him… and froze…

"Gah! What an absurdly unmanageable tomboyish princess."

Yuusuke, standing there speaking without any respect while fording the cape with a burnt hood to perform a customization repair on it later on, noticed sudden lack of the turmoil that was going on just a moment ago.

"Y-You …"

"What do you want?"

"Are you the God of calamity…? Have you come to destroy my country?"

"Eh?"

Yuusuke lost his voice for a moment again. ["Oh boy…"], Zeshald looked towards the sky while covering his brows. Silence that has fallen between the bystanders as the member of the royalty pointed out a [god of calamity] disappeared in an instant.

No matter what, calling someone an evil god was not natural. After all the existence of a "being that brought calamity every 300 years" was directly implied.

"Uhm, the power of the god of calamity … the great calamity…"

"I don't think this is the place were talking nice works."

Krielov, who was right behind Violet, immediately showed why he was the commander of the fire god corps and ordered his troops.

"Arrest those that threaten our lord immediately."

5. Zeshald's Expectations

["God of calamity?"]

["That's right, it's an incarnation of Calamity that is not a man neither an evil beast"]

Violet was lying in the middle of a huge room, that had the entirety of its floor covered in carpet. She asked this while pointing at a picture of a black evil god in a big picture book that was opened before her. Zeshald answered her question with a smile.

["Will daddy and uncle defeat him?"]

["Only the goodness in the people hearts is able to stand against the god of calamity. "]

[“Then I will become a good girl so I could help daddy and uncle”]

[“Hohoho, you are a good child, princess”]

“… … It was like that”

“So you had a relationship like that?”

“As a child, princess was an obedient and good” Zeshald told Yuusuke as he was looking at him with a stern face. “The person standing before us now is but a shadow of what she was then”. Rather than being composed, the princess simply looked defiant.

The time was just before sunset when the merchants of the main street of the lower district were closing off their stalls for the night. Meanwhile those, working during the night (nightsingers), have started their trade and were mixing with the crowd, looking for their clients. It was a curiously unique time of the day, but today an unusually heavy atmosphere descended on the certain corner of the street.

The onlookers have abruptly stopped their work and gathered around to watch an arrest by the fire god corps. By the way, [nightsingers] was this world’s name for prostitutes.

Some of the soldiers of the fire god corps who were pointing their spears at Yuusuke and Zeshald after surrounding them also showed a look of confusion on their faces.

Several years ago during the [festival of creation], which was celebrated on the New Year, king Esvobus has issued an imperial edict to the soldiers of all god corps, saying “Zeshald is not to be concerned with”. The nuance of “Don’t touch him” was also included in that edict.

Since that day Zeshald has not been to the palace and was living outside of the city in a village of the powerless. Unknown circumstances between the king and Zeshald was the cause of the notion that the king had some sort of weakness in Zeshald.

“What are you doing? Hurry and apprehend these people!”

“B-but, wouldn’t that mean disobeying kings orders…?”

“Besides, I believe we do not have a valid reason to apprehend them this time”

The soldiers, anxious from the order of Kreivol, their commanding officer, that contradicted the imperial decree of the king, were questioning the credibility of this order. This was possible because, unlike the lower rank soldiers, those that were employed by the palace corps had a certain amount of freedom (of thought).

“Don’t be concerned by this, I will personally explain (tell) this to my father”

Violet, being in a good mood after having her boredom dispelled by the unexpected meeting, declared an interesting proposal. If the two were caught, they could be brought to the palace. Princess already had her eyes on Zeshald, yet her curiosity was greatly increased by a rude man with black hair that gave off a strange, never before felt aura.

“If her majesty says it like that, the suspicious man said to be a god of calamity… was indeed called to this city to take the life of his highness… … ..”

“Hoho.. you guys are only listening to the princess when it is convenient for you”

“Wh.. What did you say?!”

Zeshald, hitting quite close to the target (of raising doubts between soldiers), cmade Kreivol raise his voice. Noticing that Zeshald attempted to take even greater control of this situation and prepared to deal the final blow as he thought of how to explain Yuusuke’s existence and power.

“Oh, you are the overly loyal type that causes his lord to die early”

“Wh … wha…?”

“I am saying that I am related to Esvobus… … Would it not be better for you to abide to the Kings orders?”

“What… what is the meaning of this!”

With his attitude having taken a complete turnaround Zeshald spoke to Kreivol in a threatening voice, looking looking him down with a death stare. This in turn made the fire god corps become wary. Zeshald’s change of face also made Violet, who was enjoying the event, shudder.

[“Teacher, teacher, why are you agitating them?”]

[“It’s all right, please trust me this time”]

After exchanging a short conversation in secret, Zeshald returned to his serious persona, spread his hands outwards, and spoke to Kreivol, who was unable to hide his irritation and annoyance.

“Esvobus wanted me to stay away from him and you have not heard the reason? Despite that you are inviting me to the palace”

“This is no invitation! There is no way criminals like you would ever get a chance to meet the king!”

“… What about my students? Do you know how many of them work in the palace?”

“… !!”

There were a lot of people in the palace that were taught by Zeshald before. Almost every healing type water arts user, belonging to the elite water god corps, looked up to Zeshald as their teacher. If Zeshald were to be caught and brought to the palace, these retainers would doubtlessly protest and appeal against this decision.

Therefore, could a faithful retainer ignore king’s intention of breaking the relationship and distancing Zeshald from himself? Torn between his loyalty and suspicions Kreivol was at loss for words.

“Th… then how will you explain this black haired man?”

“Yuusuke? I wonder …?”

Yuusuke shrugged his head at the sudden change of topic. Violet murmured “So his name is Yuusuke” as to remember the name.

“Don’t play dumb! Why did you bring a man, thought to be evil god of calamity, into the city?!”

“Really? I believe that [“evil god of calamity is just the name of the plague”] there is no way the guy over there really is the god of calamity”

After hearing this retort soldiers started looking at each other, “Evil god is just a myth, right?” being bewildered by the unvoiced question. Originally this whole arrest was orchestrated by Violet, who called the black haired Yuusuke a god of calamity.

Kreivol also froze for a moment as he did not believe that the evil god actually existed. The princess has called that man the evil god only as a pretext to apprehend Zeshald.

Having taken control of the place and silenced everyone in confusion, Zeshald started his final push.

“Do you know that if you mix all the colors you obtain black?”

Most of the divine art users could use only single type divine arts. In the very rare cases a divine art user, capable of using two types of divine arts, could be born.

“I think that his hair looks like that because of the effects of the blessing of the four great gods”

“Parents, blessed with such a child, probably also believed him to be the evil god” – continued Zeshald, introducing Yuusuke as a child, abandoned at a shrine of the powerless in a far off land. Until recently he was raised in secret by the villagers of the nearby powerless village and has only recently wandered into the outside world.

Truthfully, Zeshald’s flowing speech also persuaded the curious onlookers. “Oh so that’s how it is” look could be seen on everyone’s faces as they affirmed to old man’s finishing remark. Straightening his back and coughing delicately, Zeshald then spoke of the folklore, related to the god of calamity in a majestic tone.

“Why are the evil god statues in the temples of the powerless black? That is the color you get after mixing every other color. It was simply wrongly assumed that the power of all four gods, imperfectly united in one body, is the symbol of the god of calamity who brings misfortune. This was the conclusion that the powerless came up with after centuries of living without education. In my opinion dyes, affected by dirt and mold, passage of time, and deterioration is the result……“

“Wa – Wait a moment Zeshald. I understand, it was my bad”

Violet was extremely weak to Zeshald’s scholar mode. Thus, attempting to stop the migraine inducing flow of words, she hastily accepted her fault. While watching it with widely opened eyes Yuusuke thought that “Violet also has an unexpectedly cute side to her”.

In the midst of the confusion an order of the king arrived from the palace, ordering to break up this gathering. Message only said that “any unnecessary actions will be followed up with strict consequences”.

“What is this, I was just getting to the good part”

Zeshald said this as he was stroking his chest while thinking “It went well”.

“Don’t worry about my father. Come to the palace some other time!”

“I will be waiting” – Violet finished while waving her hand as she was returning to the highborn district accompanied by the palace guards and Kreivol.

As it was well past sunset now, onlookers also scattered and started hurriedly tidying up their stalls. A yellow haired man in his prime, who seemed to be interested in Zeshald's lecture, said that the lecture was interesting and that he will eventually write a thesis about it before leaving.

"Pheeew, that was close. We should head back towards our wagon as well"

"Thank you, but boy you sure are something"

Yuusuke commented on Zeshald's quick wits with both respect and sarcasm, to which Zeshald answered with a laugh.

***

After returning to the cart the two made a bed in the back of the wagon and started to sort aside wares to be sold at the stall tomorrow. At the same time the two were eating rara fruits and dried meat. During the preparation Yuusuke and Zeshald discussed about the incidental meeting with the princess, who was the instigator of the earlier uproar, and about the relationship between Zeshald and the king.

"I used to travel together with Esvobus. Don't you think the taste would be better with a little bit more salt?"

"Hoooo, so you used to be close with the king"

While customizing Zeshald's dried meat Yuusuke was listening to the old man's tale. The tale was from more than 20 years ago when Esvobus has not yet been crowned.

Esvobus, who was to become the ruler of the nation, made his country flourish in all aspects but military prowess (military invasion). He used to travel around the world to deepen his knowledge in order to be able to become a respectable king.

"Being a good ruler aside, what this man lacked was ambition"

Being at the top of the fire arts users, renowned for their military prowess, he preferred a peaceful resolution of all things. As he was a good ruler, the masses also supported him. Thus he had a good reputation but was criticized for the military skirmishes by the armed forces and political pressure from the other countries.

"Harassment from the neighboring countries suddenly peaked during the recent years"

"Harassment?"

A mountain range of over kilometer high divides the land into three parts, two of which belong to the neighboring country of Blue Garden. Blue Garden's social system is based on the principle that divine arts of the Four do not grant superiority. It is an emerging nation that opposes the social norms of the world.

A fortress city Paula, built at the foot of the mountain range, was the second largest city to the capital. It was constructed to watch over the border with Fonkrank. Incidentally, Paula was closer to Sanc Adiet than the Rufk village.

"Fonkrank is often marauded by what is believed to be civilian militants from the Blue Garden"

"Hey, isn't that dangerous?"

“Well, usually that would spark a war”

While king Esvobus ordered to strengthen the border security and sent out a messenger with an official protest, Blue Garden side ignored it completely, demanding abolition of the caste system.

Not only that, a lot of spies from Blue Garden started appearing in Sanc Adiet. Some people, related to the palace, were also confirmed to have defected to the Blue Garden. As the information about strengthening the border security was also leaked out, this measure also does not seem likely to produce any result in solving this matter.

“This sounds exhausting…”

“Well, no matter how pacifistic the other side is, judging from the tactics it is going to take a while until the decisive strike“

“Will this country be alright?”

To Yuusuke’s question Zeshald answered: “For now” with a grim perspective.

“After discussing it with Esvobus, I plan to get inside Blue Garden”

“What does that mean… ?”

“I will be a spy. I also got invited by another defector of Blue Garden”

That was the reason of his “worsening” relationship with the king.

“W-wait! Isn’t this some highly classified information?”

“Yeah, it is most highly classified information”

“!! Is it okay for me to hear about this?”

Yuusuke, nervous from the light tone, that Zeshald told him this information in, asked him that question. Zeshald’s face got serious as he gave his answer:

“I am worried about what will become of you after being called into this world as a god of calamity”

Amongst the many opinions of what the god of calamity will truly bring about, different interpretations on what is being considered a calamity in the stories and texts, what will the calamity be? Will it be a calamity for those, ruling the world, or a calamity for the common people? In what way could the calamity be averted?

Finally, “Who will experience the calamity?”

“Perhaps I have stepped on the road of destruction, still…”

Unable to comprehend the intentions of the existence, who gave Yuusuke this power and called him to this world, knowing only that in the legends of the ancient times arrival of the evil god was known as a turning point in the history of Kaltcio, Zeshald has decided Yuusuke to be a transcendent existence that will judge this world.

He believed that Yuusuke would surely base his decision on the information he has obtained.

“I want you to know about many things about this world”

6. Beginning of the New Days

“This is made from the mooph (モーフ) material?”

“That’s right”

“How much?”

Even if the fabric was made from the fur of the animals, grown in Rufk village, after this customer they had completely sold out the clothes, tailored with Yuusuke’s customization power.

In the morning they lined good quality clothes and shoes at a bargain price at the stall, which they reserved. The goods were of good quality thus they literally flew off the shelves. Yuusuke, who was being the sales boy as Zeshald was showing him the ropes, completed the deal in a breath.

“We sold a lot. Now we should search for the daily necessities and prepare for the trip back”

“Right”

Yuusuke thought about the important secret, he was told last night, while he was packing the unsold accessories. Because of the recent provocations Zeshald was planning to infiltrate the neighboring country of Blue Garden as a spy.

It is not like he planned to take on this duty from the beginning. While palace officials were busy with their everyday duties, a direct military provocation was happening at the border with the Blue Garden. Meanwhile other provocateurs had their hands full with setting up the blockades on the main roads to further obstruct the flow of goods and people.

Loyal people, informed about the potential betrayers, considered shipping things through these roads to be too dangerous, which profited the betrayers even more so.

Despite that there still were people who held real power and achievements. Zeshald, still famous and popular within the palace, was one of them. Thinking shallowly, having retired from official duties as well as separated for the palace, Zeshald, having a lot of free time and talent, was indeed a suitable man for this task.

Yesterday’s commotion has shown the spies of Blue Garden “the antagonism between the former royal head divine arts instructor, Zeshald, and the king of Fonkrank, Esvobus” might indeed have turned out to be useful the propaganda that Zeshald said it to be.

“Do you understand? Even if the thing you want to buy looks cheap, do not immediately buy it – check around the market twice to evaluate the price”

“After all overcharging also exists here”

After his departure Zeshald wanted to entrust the matters of Rufk village to Yuusuke. There was also Sun. For Yuusuke to understand this world as soon as possible she could pass on her own knowledge and wisdom regarding the everyday life.

“It will be lunch soon”

“Want to grab a bite?”

After getting nearly all of the necessary commodities, the two entered a nearby restaurant. Even thou there were many stalls lined up along the street where one could grab a light meal, Zeshald chose an ordinary restaurant as to teach Yuusuke various new things.

The difference between the restaurant of the lower class district and those of the upper districts was huge. Generally a cheap restaurant also functioned as a bar during the night.

“These places never change, do they?”

“Well, the civilization is the same everywhere. Despite it being a different world you are still able to find a lot of similarities”

Zeshald’s teaching method, based on moving around the city and showing the rules, allowed Yuusuke to slowly familiarize himself with the general knowledge of this world. As it was dinnertime the inside of the restaurant was packed. In the midst of the lively clatter of the guests, a pair, resembling a teacher and a student, was an interesting sight for other visitors.

***

—Early afternoon—

After coming back to their wagon they loaded it with the purchased goods and started preparations for returning to the village. If they left early in the morning they would be able to arrive at the Rufk village in the evening. Yuusuke also bought some seeds as he wanted to cultivate a field at the corner of the village. He planned to start customizing the land as soon as he returned home.

“I am sorry, are you mister Zeshald?”

As they were tying their luggage with a rope, a green haired man greeted them with a light smile.

“Hmm? My name is indeed Zeshald”

“So you are the royal head divine arts instructor”

Zeshald looked at the man who spoke with a mysterious voice for a moment, meanwhile Yuusuke blankly stared at the two divine arts users. The young man seemed to know Zeshald but he clearly was not his friend.

Knowing about Zeshald’s complex situation from their earlier discussion, Yuusuke assumed that this green haired young man was “a spy from Blue Garden”. Zeshald called out to Yuusuke before Yuusuke has fully understood the situation.

“Sorry Yuusuke, but could you leave us alone for the moment?”

“Eh? Y-yes”

Leaving Yuusuke at the wagon, Zeshald invited the green haired divine arts user for a walk on a road, leading towards the city. Although Yuusuke did not realize it, the green haired wind arts user accepted the invitation. The conversation between two divine arts users was private as the guest was a wind arts user and he was manipulating the wind so only his partner would be able to hear him talk.

[“Do you feel like leaving it, this country?”]

As Zeshald predicted, it seems that yesterday’s commotion was the deciding factor to initiate the plan to win the Zeshald over to the Blue Garden side.

After some time Zeshald returned alone and started to make his bed in the wagon.

Yuusuke was unable to find a topic to talk about since the old man returned. Zeshald was talking most of the time while Yuusuke wore a concerned expression. After finishing tomorrow’s preparations they laid down to rest.

“It might be a bit too early to go to sleep”

“Yeah, the sun is still up”

If someone would have listened to Zeshald’s quiet words and Yuusuke’s wordless replies, he would never be able to understand the true meaning of this conversation.

***

The next morning Yuusuke and Zeshald left the city before sunrise. During the journey Zeshald was talking about Kaltcio.

Soldiers of the divine art city guard, tasked with maintaining order, had the area they had to patrol, extent of their authority, and actions, to be taken in case trouble occurred clearly defined to them to the extent where they had minute instructions what to do in case of public urination, what to teach about hygiene, and where to take the apprehended person.

“It is a good thing to visit adjacent villages to obtain new information as well as to learn horse-riding. When buying a new horse you should go to the city and…”

Zeshald was making Yuusuke cram a lot of new things at once as opposed the comfortable learning pace from before. Yuusuke, remembering the uncomfortable feeling, thinking he should also give his all right now, was also trying to remember as much as he could.

[“It is related to the green haired fellow from yesterday after all”]

Going at the current pace, by the time they arrived to the village, Yuusuke thought he’d fall sick with the exam fever.

“Welcome home teacher. …Yuusuke, what happened?”

“Wa… My temples are twinkling”

“Umm, was it too sudden?”

As they arrived at the Rufk village the villagers gathered to help in unloading the Zeshald's wagon. Part of the sold goods were provisioned by the villagers and part of the daily necessities were also requested by them.

"Teacher! Did you buy a new hair razor?"

"Yes, take it from there"

"Perhaps you sold the shell earrings?"

"Regrettably I only sold a pair"

Villagers were bustling noisily around Zeshald for a while until the old man slowly changed the topic to tomorrow's weather.

"By the way, I have decided to go on a long trip again tomorrow so, everyone, please be careful and avoid getting injured or falling ill."

Suddenly all of the villager's emotions turned to surprise, but this was not the first time Zeshald went to far off lands or left the home for a long time due to his research, so villagers quickly regained their composure. They soon started jokingly talking about having to live more carefully for a while.

This time, instead of exchanging parting greetings with Zeshald, Sun turned towards the teacher with a confused expression, saying "I haven't heard of this". Having expected this Yuusuke calmly watched this chain of events unfold.

"Then will you return home?"

"Yes, I will, Sun"

"Okay…"

Hearing this, the villagers also returned to their homes. After placing the wagon behind the house and guiding the horse to the stable the three entered their house though the back entrance.

"What happened, teacher?"

As soon as they entered the house, Sun jumped closer to Zeshald. Teacher always told her about his trip prior to leaving the village for a long time or going on a long journey. This time everything happened too quickly for the girl.

"Sorry, the circumstances became a bit too complicated this time"

"…you cannot speak about it, can you?"

Sun cast her eyes down as Zeshald nodded in acknowledgement. Zeshald stroked Sun's white, well kempt hair and, having asked Yuusuke to join in, started to speak again.

"Yuusuke, you can live in this house even when I am gone. Sun, please look after him"

"eeeeh? ME?! Looking after YUUSUKE?

Zeshald implied the two of them living under one roof. Stealing a glance at Yuusuke she saw him listening intently to Zeshald without noticing her watching him.

“I thought of leaving things concerning Sun and the village to you, Yuusuke, as you still have quite a long way to go in understanding the common things about this world”

“I understand…”

Yuusuke nodded, silently accepting Zeshald’s instructions and thoughts. Zeshald also nodded, appreciating Yuusuke’s thoughts.

Zeshald acted with sincere concern to educate Yuusuke about the world as much as possible and to push him in the correct direction knowing that, from hereon, Yuusuke will have to live without his support.

“Broaden your world, Yuusuke”

Zeshald also gave a key from the library, which was inside the house, to Yuusuke so the boy could learn to read and absorb the knowledge contained in the books.

That evening the three of them ate their supper, which was slightly better than usual, together. It was a party made with wishes to send Zeshald off on a safe journey.

—Next morning—

Zeshald left before sunrise when it was still dark. A little bit away from the village he waited for the envoys of the Blue Garden slightly off the main road. When they arrived, he boarded their carriage. Afterwards they took the shortest route to the national border between Fonkrank and Blue Garden.

It was a bold move, but after passing Sanc Adiet they took the main road, leading to the national border. Spies, accompanying Zeshald, were that convinced that Zeshald would not betray them to the road patrols.

According to the report of the several years long investigation, the discord between king Esvobus and Zeshald only deepened over time. Finally an order to lure him over to the Blue Garden side was issued four days ago.

Footpads were ordered to invite him if they saw a good opportunity to do so. Princess Violet’s fondness of Zeshald was of some concern, but even she had no choice but to disregard personal feelings over governmental affairs thus Zeshald had no more support left in Fonkrank.

“We should be able to arrive at Paula in three more days after crossing the border”

“Doesn’t matter, I am used to sleeping in the carriages. That aside could you have that dangerous group leave the village?”

[“That village is my place of rest”] exclaimed Zeshald as he pointed out a presence, hiding in the shadows near the Rufk village.

“… … As expected of the former royal head divine arts instructor… to be able to sense the presence of the wind arts users group”

Sighing helplessly Zeshald returned a smile to his companions.

***

Waking in the morning Yuusuke found Zeshald had already left. From today onwards Yuusuke would have to think and make decisions for himself. Looking at the column of text in the customization window for the key for Zeshald's study, Yuusuke, having decided on the most urgent problem, greeted Sun.

"Morning, Sun"

"… Good morning"

She answered awkwardly from the other side of the table. Seeing her so nervous with anxiousness showing all over her face, Yuusuke thought to himself ["Nothing will change if I will not make the first move"] and changed the topic. After putting the key into his pocket he suddenly stood up, making Sun shiver her shoulders.

"Let's start making breakfast, alright?"

" Eh? Ah, okay… I am sorry!"

Sun frantically picked up a bucket and turned to go to the well outside. Yuusuke shrugged his shoulders while looking at her go and then walked towards the food shelves to pick up dried meat and rara fruits that were supposed to be their breakfast. Having picked up the fruits he called the customize screen and found the parameter for their sweetness.

"Oh, Sun. G'morning"

"Ah, good morning … aunt Bahana"

"You are preparing breakfast from now on? Wouldn't it be better to make him go for the water?"

Aunt Bahana spoke to Sun like that while shaking her head, urging her to pass on the manual labor. Unable to get any anxiety medication with Zeshald gone, exchanging morning greeting was difficult enough for the girl not to mention having any casual talk.

"You are having it tough, eh?"

"uuuugh"

While it was going to be tough, Bahama has decided to become the strength for the two youths in Zeshald's stead.

***

It was around the time morning mist cleared on the lower districts of Sanc Adiet. In the dining room of the Volace palace, towering above the highborn district, Violet, proceeding to cut and eat the best parts of honey soaked fruits, served as dessert, proceeded to complain to her aide.

"Zeshald will not come to the palace today either, I guess"

"Probably he has a lot of other matters to settle"

"It's boring. How long is father planning to be angry with Zeshald? He should make up with him soon"

Despite thinking she would be able to hear those long missed tales of travel after an unexpected reunion at the lower city, Zeshald showed no signs of ever coming to visit her. Kreivol, her aide, was only scolding her noisily about not behaving like a princess so spending time with him was not the least bit interesting.

“That’s right, there was another interesting guy, called Yuusuke”

He was a rude man that seemed to be an acquaintance of Zeshald. He seems to have grown up in a far off land so it might be possible to hear strange stories from him.

“If I go to lower city incognito again, I might get some interesting information”

“Princess, the king has released an order forbidding traveling incognito for the time being”

“I don’t care, I DON’T CARE! I will just behave like a spoilt child asking him things like [Do you hate me, Father?]”

Chief attendant, crackling from princess’s bad manners, sighed from all his heart, saying “King also has his shares of hardships”.

***

Several days later, every nation received an official announcement from Blue Garden.

—Former royal head divine arts instructor of Fonkrank, Zeshald, is welcomed as an instructor of the elite divine arts users of our great country—

7. Princess of the Flames

“It’s a lie! There’s no way Zeshald could’ve betrayed us!”

“It’s the truth. I understand your feelings but try to calm down”

In a room at the top of the Volace palace Violet’s close aide, speaking with a steady voice, tried to calm the angry princess down. Violet, having no one else to vent her anger, anxiety, and uneasiness on, glared at her aide who was picking up a chair she had kicked down before.

“You are the ones that shunned Zeshald! Aren’t you silently laughing at him?!”

“Not at all”

Although the angry princess kept herself from spontaneous bursts of divine arts, she scattered the fruit and flowers, served on the table, onto the floor. The curtains were already torn down and a part of the wall was stained with pieces of broken tableware and wine. The room was in a complete chaos.

“Damn it!… Why?!”

“Princess, please mind your language”

“Shut up! Get out of my face!”

Violet, with her back turned towards her aide, pointed towards the door. Kreivol bowed politely, as usual, and silently left the room. He fully understood Violet's outburst. He was also troubled, thinking that the event, which happened the other day, might have been a cause for this.

["Still, the disturbance is spreading in the palace… His defection to the opposing side might urge others to follow as well"]

["From now on even more attention will have to be focused on the actions of the palace staff"]

Kreivol thought as he wondered about means to tighten his grip of the fire god corps that he personally commanded.

Violet, having kicked the luxurious chair down again, was panting while gripping her shaking shoulders with both hands. Father Esvobus simply turned her away saying ["We will not talk about Zeshald"] without mentioning anything regarding the announcement from Blue Garden.

Their accidental meeting in the lower town the other day was not enough of a pretense for him to leave. The thoughts, that her actions could have triggered this, were tearing her aching heart apart with thorns of uneasiness and regret.

"Why……"

["Zeshald could not have betrayed them. There had to be some sort of explanation"] Violet thought while lowering her head to fight off the blurring vision in her eyes. Suddenly an image of a black haired man appeared in her mind. ["That rude and ignorant man, called Yuusuke, what has become of him?"]

"Did he leave as well? Or could he …"

Princess raised her head up and looked outside the window. A small forest could be dimly seen before the endless plains, stretching into the horizon.

["Maybe I will be able to find some sort of clue if I visit the village of the powerless where Zeshald used to live"]

Violet's eyes beamed with the usual self-confidence as she decided on her next objective.

***

While palace officials were shocked by Zeshald's defection to Blue garden, common folk accepted it without much shock disregarding it to ["this is what palace got by alienating its officials"]. To people, better informed about the event inside the palace, it was a topic for discussions.

A man with a cheerful face walked through the back alley of the never changing main street of the never changing city.

"Hehehe…. With the rulers of the city shaken I can finally walk the streets"

He has spent last several years hiding himself in the Sanc Adiet slums. Although he has considered fleeing to Blue Garden, manual labor in a country where one's standing in society was decided by his skills would not allow him to live an easy life, he desired.

Compared to living in such a strict environment, living a free life of a social outcast here seemed more preferable to him.

Previously he always had to worry about encountering Zeshald while walking on the main street, but now that Zeshald has abandoned Fonkrank kingdom for the neighboring country of Blue Garden so there was no reason left for him to fear for.

“I feel like I can do anything! Hahah I feel that I could destroy a HUGE mountain in a single hit”

Feeling like that he approached the main plaza of the lower district. He could see a crowd around the gate to the middle district. Interested in what kind of spectacle has gathered people here he approached the crowd.

***

“EEEEK, LET GO OF ME KREIVOL!”

“I can’t do that, Princess. Even if it is within the kingdom, going outside the city is just too dangerous”

Having heard about a village of the powerless where Zeshald lived, Violet attempted to go towards Rufk village. She managed to travel as far as the gate to the lower district before Kreivol caught up to her. Violet, intending to leave the city, continued to fight with her aide who was determined to bring her back to the palace.

As Kreivol thought to avoid involving the palace guard, he mobilized every soldier of the god soldier corps and had them come down into the city under the pretense of patrol. Palace bureaucrats, knowing the whimsical nature of their princess, unanimously agreed with this.

“I am only going to that powerless village for a little check! How can that be dangerous?”

“If the king said so, then it is dangerous. Also, there is no reason for you to visit a village where he lived”

Although Kreivol attempted to subtly persuade the princess as not to let the masses hear about delicate subjects, princess Violet, in the midst of her tantrum, was completely ignorant about the prestige of the royal family as she talked about her objective.

“I might be able to find some clues as to what happened to Zeshald”

“… … this is not a good reason”

Kreivol, starting to feel a headache from all the worrying and fighting with the princess of the flames, urged Violet to behave more prudently. In the midst of this small racket one of the guards approached them and discretely called out to the commander.

“… Sir, there’s a person, who says he has something to say about the village, the princess is speaking of…”

“Hmm?”

Kreivol turned his head towards the soldier and saw a shabby looking wind arts user waiting behind the guard while lowering his head. Noticing Kreivol’s gaze, the wind user smiled a forced smile. Kreivol scowled, feeling that this man is dangerous.

“What is it? Speak up”

“H-hey, the thing is, there are villagers in that village that are in contact with Blue Garden”

Hearing this Kreivol and Violet instantly looked at each other.

***

Sun was watering a small field, which was a short distance away from Zeshald’s house. In the meantime Yuusuke was fishing at a nearby river.

“Mh~ Mhhhhn~~~”

Humming a song, she was looking out for early sprouts while sprinkling water left and right with a convenient sprinkler that was produced by Yuusuke. Sun really liked this convenient tool that produced a small rain. In the morning she also chatted about Yuusuke with Bahana, who was cooking some sort of meal.

It was the 7th day since Yuusuke started living in Zeshald’s house and Sun was starting to be able to act more naturally around him. Sun was optimistic with her progress, thinking that she might even be able to deal with her trauma as well.

After putting the water sprinkler to the tool shed, Sun was walking the village street to draw some water for dinner as she turned her head towards the road to Sanc Adiet, where a cloud of dust in the distance caught her attention. This cloud of dust was getting closer at a slow pace.

“?… … Who could it be…?”

***

Four carriages, full of city guards from Sanc Adiet, were rushing towards the village, surrounded by the cloud of dust.

“I can see it! That is Rufk, right?”

“Princess, please sit down. It is dangerous to move about in a running vehicle”

Soldiers in the carriages were well-trained individuals skilled in either attack, defense, healing, or communications. The carriages, supported by water and wind arts users, were going at a speed of a single person riding on a horseback.

Kreivol, warning Violet, who was hanging over the window at her seat, checked out the surroundings to confirm that there was no danger. There was no way he could bring princess Violet to the village, but he knew that if he took her back to the palace she would immediately sneak out and follow him.

He decided it would be easier to protect the princess if he could watch over her. Thus, usually stubborn Kreivol permitted Violet to join the trip this time. Instead, the trip made the common guards really nervous.

“Are we clear, princess? No matter what happens you must not get separated from me”

“Got it, got it. You are such a worrywart”

Violet was cheerful. Since the guards were going along with her, she believed there would be no trouble even if there were spies in the Rufk village. However she did feel some regret over the circumstances that brought her here – the complaint of the man that approached Kreivol some time ago.

—There was a spy collaborator of Blue Garden in the Rufk village—

He has seen a place where powerless were working with a spy from Blue Garden when he had visited the woods, surrounding the village, few years ago along with a superior earth arts user.

They were attacked by the spy in an attempt to silence them. Earth arts user was killed while the witness somehow managed to escape alive. He knew that the royal head divine arts instructor Zeshald was the main person, supporting the spy, but, thinking it was some sort of mistake, he stayed silent until now.

["There's no doubt that the period of time matches…. But that man has something abnormal in his eyes"]

There was nothing strange in having a strange atmosphere around oneself after spending a long period of time alone and worrying about something. Even thou Kreivol understood that, he already had a bad prejudice about the man that approached him.

While having such thoughts the party in the carriage was approaching Rufk village.

***

Yuusuke was fishing in a small river that ran through the nearby forest. He was using a fishing pole, some fishing line, and fur bait, which he obtained through customization. A bigger river with big fish was farther away from the village and took a day just to walk back and forth, thus Yuusuke was aiming for small fish, living in the smaller river.

This was a suggestion from Bahana as it would allow Yuusuke to gain some stamina as, coming from a modern world, he was pretty weak for a man in this world.

"If I had to say… it became that much easier just by modifying it this little"

Yuusuke thought he would be easily able to catch the game in the forest by tweaking the traps a little bit. He was satisfied by a full fishing basket, which he managed to fill just by using a strong and transparent fishing line and highly customized fur bait.

"This should be enough"

Having caught ten fish, Yuusuke was packing his tools and preparing to leave the fishing spot as he suddenly felt human presence and turned his head towards the newcomer.

"Hmm, you really look like a novice"

"Ah, IT'S YOU!!"

Before he could notice, a green haired man stood behind him. It was the same man that called out to Zeshald a few days ago. He called himself Reifold and was probably a spy from the Blue Garden. He suggested Yuusuke to quickly return back to the village.

"It looks like something terrible is about to happen"

“What is it? What did YOU do?”

“Me? Oh I didn’t do anything?”

Reifold spread his arms while making a faint smile in response to Yuusuke’s allegations.

He couldn’t exactly put it into words, but this man carried a different kind of atmosphere than Zeshald. Even thou he felt that the man could not be trusted, warned about a terrible event, about to happen at the village, Yuusuke became worried and hurried to return to the village.

“Hey, you … are not here anymore!”

By the time he finished packing the fishing tools and the catch, Reifold’s figure was nowhere to be seen.

***

It was early afternoon. Having left half of the city guard at the village, a carriage was rushing back towards Sanc Adiet. Violet and Kreivol were sitting against each other. A suspect for treason – young powerless girl – was with them, her hands restricted with shackles. As expected, she was shaking while cowering her body.

“You’ve been shaking the whole time. Are ability users that scary?”

As they arrested this girl for being a long time servant in Zeshald’s house, a young woman from the village tried her best to resist them and get them to stop treating this girl with violence. She reasoned that this girl was almost killed by the young ability users some time ago and was terrified of anyone, wielding divine arts, since then.

Divine soldier corps guards paid no heed to these protests and stopped their violent use of divine arts only by Violet’s orders. She had been listening to Zeshald’s stories about the lives of the powerless people so she felt sick watching that. (NOTE: 衛士隊 is used 2 paragraphs earlier while神民衛士 is used here. From what I understand, Kreivol took a detachment of city guard as the main force as well as several god corps soldiers as princess’ personal guard)

After all Violet’s original goal was to visit this village to learn about Zeshald’s life and needlessly injuring the villagers would not help her cause.

Violet also could not ignore the fact that, as the resisting villager said, the girl was so terrified that she could not even walk or enter the carriage by herself. Also, wanting to learn more about Zeshald, she suggested to escort the girl to the capital herself. Of course Kreivol opposed that saying —

[“A member of royalty riding in the same carriage as powerless… and one suspected of treason at that!”]

[“You are coming with me so it’s all right”]

Kreivol could only hopelessly surrender to Violets carefree, confident smile. Having sworn allegiance to king Esvobus and having had the princess put under his care, this was his usual reaction to the cold treatment he had received from the princess.

“You have lived together with Zeshald, right? Have you seen any suspicious people around him?”

“… … Do you … know teacher? … …”

“Zeshald has often played with me in the palace when I was a child”

Violet looked at Sun, who raised her head with [“Eh?“] expression showing on her face, with her red eyes beaming with confidence and determination.

“Please tell me everything you know about Zeshald”

8. Yuusuke’s Decision

Having hurriedly returned to the village, Yuusuke called out to Bahana, who he found loitering near the village gate.

“Miss Bahana!”

“Ah, YUSUKE! It’s Terrible! Sun, she …”

Bahana rushed over to Yuusuke and clung to him saying, “Sun was taken by a group of guards”.

Guards, surrounding a guard carriage that was still in the village, started shouting after spotting Yuusuke. Yuusuke handed over his fishing tools and the fish to aunt Bahana and started walking towards the carriage.

“STOP RIGHT THERE!”

“You, with the black hair, your name is Yuusuke, right?”

“It’s as you see.”

Still nervous from having weapons pointed at him, Yuusuke feigned calmness as he faced the guards. After exchanging a few words with the other soldiers, one of the guards approached Yuusuke, informing him that he is being apprehended as a suspect for spying.

They acted completely different around him as he was a divine arts user, not to mention one whose skills were not known. Instead of using force like they did with Sun before, they exerted caution when dealing with Yuusuke.

“I want to know where you took Sun, so could you take me to the city as soon as possible?”

Yuusuke urged the guard towards the highway while slowly approaching him. Yuusuke, still being feared by the guards even after having clad his hands in shackles, spotted aunt Bahana with the group of worried villagers. After telling her, “I’m off to see Sun,” the youth entered the guard carriage.

***

“Hmm, so Zeshald was reading records and research related to the Evil God the entire time.”

“Yes… At least suspicious people … unknown people … or anyone like them … have not visited him.”

“And Yuusuke?”

“Eh? About Mr. Yuusuke… I am not sure about him myself…”

Sun lied, as the person that Zeshald has recently brought with him into the village was yet not that well known to her. Still, she was ordered by Zeshald to keep the fact that Yuusuke appeared from the small shrine a secret.

Sun averted her eyes from shame after telling a lie, but it was not noticed since she has been terrified the entire time.

“Excuse me. We have received a report from the guards stationed in the village. They have captured the black haired man.”

“Oh, is that so.”

A communication officer, that was a wind arts user has informed Violet’s group. Sun’s face has become even darker after hearing the report about Yuusuke, to which Violet showed a worried smile.

“As with you, I just want to have a little talk with him. After all he might be a spy as well.”

Contrary to Violet, who was happy hearing about Zeshald, Kreivol was carefully observing Sun.

The girl held her hands in front of her. They were clad in wooden shackles, made to be used for the powerless. Her being frightened the entire time also did not seem to be an act. Still, he had to consider the possibility that it was an act.

[“By speaking this way, princess is trying to avoid tormenting the girl.”]

After the announcement by Blue Garden, the atmosphere in the palace right now was volatile, thus suspicions of betrayal would be met with severe consequences.

For the time being, Violet was satisfied with having a conversation partner. As Kreivol was thinking about the interrogation of the black haired man he met a short while ago, the guard carriage arrived at Sanc Adiet.

“Whaaa~~…, what a huge city!”

“What!? Is this your first time in the city?”

“Yes, as a matter of fact……”

Sun, feeling dread from all divine arts users except Zeshald, has not been to Sanc Adiet once.

The girl slowly got out of the carriage after Violet, who jumped out ahead of her. Still unsteady on her feet, Sun felt affinity towards Violet, with whom she shared a mutual feeling for Zeshald. As her partner was a younger girl, despite being an ability user, Sun did not feel that much fear towards the princess.

After getting out of the carriage, Sun looked towards the highway, and after seeing another cloud of dust, confirmed the approach of another carriage. Believing that Yuusuke was riding on it, she felt a little bit relieved.

***

Yuusuke, having his hands shackled behind him, admired the soldier carriage that was not shaking at all despite going twice as fast as the wagon that he rode on when going to the city with Zeshald. At the same time, he was reading the customization menu for his shackles.

He noticed that if he concentrated enough, he could manipulate the parameters as well as activate the customization/creation without using his hands.

["It looks like I will be able to do this intuitively once I get used to it"]

Despite not able to stop the divine arts user from using his skills, the shackles were made by earth and fire arts users, and the quality of craftsmanship was very high, so they would not break easily. But, if they became ordinary…

["Parameters are quite similar to those of shouka… If I exert all my strength when I need to take them off it should be ok"]

Yuusuke was practicing manipulating parameters, while concentrating his mind and also being careful not to press the execution button.

Although he was sitting obediently, Yuusuke's gaze was defocused as he looked absentminded, despite being clearly focused on something. Such atmosphere, coupled with the color of his hair, brought even more uneasiness to the guards that were riding in the carriage together with him.

***

"Princess, let us return to the palace."

"Hm? Are we not waiting for Yuusuke?"

Kreivol, who was scolding Violet that ["Jumping from the carriage is a sign of bad manners,"] was mindful about the curious residents of the city that have started to gather around them. A spy of Blue Garden could have been mixed up in the crowd.

Since the approaching carriage was still some distance away, Kreivol judged it would be better for them to return to the palace instead of standing here. Since that meant the end of the scolding, Violet happily accepted Kreivol's proposal.

"Aaaah, your highness! I am glad to see you back safely."

A green haired man with a suspicious look in his eyes, who was surrounded by the city guards, turned towards them as they were nearing the gate, separating middle class and lower class districts. He was rubbing his hand with a flattering smile floating on his face.

"That's right, we had this guy wait here." – remembered Violet.

The man has been standing there as if waiting for merits. While he was flattering Violet, he shoved extremely rude attitude towards the guards.

Sun froze after seeing the sunburnt face of that man.

— ["Woohoo, we hit a jackpot! Ahahahahaha!! – "]—

— [“Heheh, hold his bitch down like this.“]—

— [“Aw, the hell. I was aiming for the neck.”] —

Fleeting nightmare of her past suddenly rose up from her memories.

“N… No.. Nooooo……!!!”

“Hm? Hey?! What’s happened to you?!!!”

***

The man looked at the girl while talking with the princess. [“It can’t be!”], he thought as he was overcome by anxiety. After successfully escaping from that terrifying water arts user, named Zeshald, he was hiding in the city slums for nearly ten years. Until recently, he was fearing apprehension his every waking minute.

This time, regaining his freedom after Zeshald’s exile, he got a chance to get on the good side of palace officials. He devised a plan to provide them with information concerning a Blue Garden spy. After all, there was nothing in that [powerless] village.

Compared to Foncrank, treatment of [powerless] in the Blue Garden differed like heaven and earth. Contrary to the Blue Garden, in addition to being treated like cattle, [powerless] could not expect to obtain support from the country officials in Fonkrank. (NOTE: this sentence can be completely off the mark)

Even if the incident from nearly ten years ago, concerning [powerless] treasured by Zeshald, came to light and truth about the deaths of two [powerless] and one earth arts user would surface, Zeshald, who killed the earth arts user, was now in the enemy nation of Blue Garden.

He expected that this would increase the credibility of his story and admonish any lingering doubts. Still —

[“Unbelievable… the brat from back then…? Her wound was supposed to be fatal… !!”]

Having thought this far, he suddenly realized that Zeshald was a healing type divine water arts user. If he could wield his arts to the extent of being able to kill a person by momentarily stopping his blood flow, he might have been able to save the girl despite her fatal condition.

[“Bad! This is bad! She remembers about me… …! Wa-wait it’s still okay, the result will be the same.”]

[“She was a still a brat then. She should not be able to remember what happened back then too well. If the man that seemed to be her father, who died back then, were to become a Blue Garden spy collaborator, then my problems would simply disappear.”]

While the wind user was persuading himself, his body breaking in cold sweat, the guard carriage that Yuusuke was riding in had arrived at the city entrance.

***

Yuusuke was brought up to the district gate. Upon arriving, he saw fire god corps, clad in brightly colored clothes, gathered along with the city guards at a location not far from the district gate.

Looking for the bright red twintails, thinking, [“has that Violet come down to the city again?”] he spotted the familiar white hair.

“Sun!”

The guards surrounding Yuusuke instantly heightened their guard, since Yuusuke suddenly started running towards the other group of guards gathered around the gate guardhouse. They started chasing him while keeping a small distance.

If not for princess Violet, who jumped at her asking what happened, Sun, whose legs gave up their strength, would have been dragged off by the guards, who thought it to be normal to drag a resisting person away.

Instead, the guards were halfheartedly scattering the curious spectators while they waited for their princess’s mood to change. Suddenly, a black haired man, clad in shackles, jumped into the scene followed by a group of city guards, increasing the tension tenfold.

“Oh! Yuusuke! You came!”

“Sun!”

Without even caring to reply to Violet’s call, Yuusuke attended to Sun, who was shaking on the ground. Despite that, since Sun’s sudden collapse also weighed down on her mind, the princess restrained herself from dishing out fiery punishment on Yuusuke.

“Sun… is everything alright?”

“no…… n-no…….ah……”

Sun was muttering something, lying face down, covering her face with the shackled hands. She was trembling after curling up into a ball as if to hide from something. Yuusuke understood that his words were not reaching the girl. Thus, not knowing how to deal with Sun when she was in such a state, he redirected his attention towards the princess.

“Hey You, what have you done to Sun?!”

“ I.. I haven’t done anything!”

Violet, not used to being spoken to so frankly, froze momentarily, having had her self-confidence shattered by Yuusuke’s angry question that he asked disregarding every social norm.

“I was only simply talking to her!”

“Is this what you call [simply talking to her!?!?!?”

Shouting abruptly, Yuusuke inclined his body forward. After taking a hit on his back, as if losing strength in his entire body, he fell on his knees. Because his hands were tied behind his back, Yuusuke could not support his body and he fell down.

[“What is this? … The back of my nose feels heavy…?”]

Compared to the hazy consciousness and swaying vision he had at the time he appeared in this world, what he felt now was quite different. He heard a conversation from somewhere above him as he felt dull pain in his head as if it was being pierced by iron needles.

“Hey, stop using violence!”

“Eh? Y-Yes…. I am sorry mam.”

Yuusuke understood that he fell after being hit by a city guard. He was hit at the back of his head, and, when he fell on his knees, the soldier has probably also kicked him.

[“Damn…..!”]

From being hit into the back of his neck, he felt no strength from the waist down. While Yuusuke was mustering his strength in his current state, he managed to raise his face to get a glimpse of Sun. The girl had raised her face a little bit, noticed Yuusuke lying down on the ground, and covered again with her body continuing to tremble.

[“Shit, I’ll only needlessly frighten her even more like this.”]

Yuusuke, being angry at himself for his own helplessness, was thinking about how good it would be if he could customize his own body, and complained to whomever gave him this power for not giving his body any fighting abilities.

Even if he created a powerful suit of armor with his ability, its ability to help the wearer through the tough situation would still depend on that wearer’s physical abilities. Being a game otaku, Yuusuke had little experience in fighting, not to mention any training in martial arts.

“Damnit Yuusuke, don’t you keep crawling on the ground like this!”

“Oh~! It’s this girl! She is the child from back then!”

Violet, who has called a soldier that was a water arts user and was currently instructing him, only now remembered the green haired man that has given her the information. This man was saying those words as he was pointing towards the girl lying on the ground. He decided to gamble now and continued his fake story.

If only he could somehow connect the story to the fact that the girl became terrified after seeing him. She has succumbed to fear because she remembered the tragedy from her childhood. Even though he was not sure if she remembered all the details from that day, it would still be convenient for him to silence her by using this opportunity.

A powerless man, accused of dealing with a Blue Garden spy has brought a young child with him. It was surely to fool the eyes of any potential witnesses. He saw this child getting hit by a stray divine art during the battle. It was a serious would so he thought the girl to be beyond saving.

Having thought of a “It happened back then” story, he approached the princess and, faking politeness, told it to her. Violet, fond of listening about adventures and other people stories, listened attentively to this man.

“uuuuuhm….”

However, for Violet, who knew “old geezer Zeshald” since infancy, the “Zeshald” in this story seemed like a different person. Based on what she heard about “teacher Zeshald” on her way to the city, Sun and Zeshald – she could not feel any signs of either of them being spies.

["Th.. That reaction does not seem favorable… Was it too soon after all?…… Th-That's right – the evidence! It will go my way once I show her the evidence!"]

Passing Violet's reaction as ["Was Sun really there during that incident"], he decided to prove girl's presence during the incident by showing the scar that the divine art must have left on her body. Man was staring at Suns dumbfounded face as he was telling about his bravery during the fight with the spy

Humans are strange creatures. When something outside their range of comprehension happens, they easily fall into a state where their mind stops functioning . When confronted with anger or malice, rather than getting angry, rather than getting sad, they are overwhelmed by surprise. Sun was surprised.

She, who has never traveled farther than the village outskirts, who was ignorant of the ways of the world, was surprised that such kind of humans existed.

["Enough with your nonsense."]

Hearing the man's story, Yuusuke, who was still lying next to Sun, understood that this wind arts user was one of the two that attacked Sun and her father. His body was shaking from resentment of being unable to do anything. Gathering his hazy consciousness by utilizing his anger like it was some game resource, he opened the customization menu.

"There is no mistake! Here, she should have a scar around this area from that encounter!"

"!!!….."

"H-Hey!!"

Frustrated by the man, Violet groaned while holding her chin. Meanwhile the green haired man walked towards Sun, who was still in shock, and forcibly made her stand by pulling her on the shackles.

Sun, finally regaining her senses, started struggling to get away from this man. Before Violet, who was already wary of how freely this person acted in front of her, could even comprehend his actions, the wind user has torn the powerless girl's clothes to pieces with a wind blade divine art.

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!"

"Look, it's there after all! It's here, HERE, it's this scar!"

Holding the desperately resisting girl by the manacles that tied her hands, the man was pointing towards the scar that ran diagonally through Sun's abdomen.

Rather than questioning the scar, that was the reminder of a wound so deep that it even held different color that girl's skin, Violet was alerted of the true nature of the man that he has just revealed.

["This man…?"]

"This scar might be the result of Zeshald's healing arts. That's right! It might be that my escape was successful because that traitor was forced to heal this wound"

"ENOUGH WITH YOUR CRAP!"

Yuusuke punched the man's face with the shackles (SHACKLE PUNCH) as the wind user was drunk on his glory. After standing up, Yuusuke hit him with all his might again with the Kaizer Knuckles (from what I found in google this is probably a reference to knuckle dusters in some games, namely FF, Ragnarok Online, castlevania), he made from the shackles that were meant to be used for power users, and thus were made from a very hard material to begin with.

Man was facing sideward, pressing both hands to his face. City guards could not understand how Yuusuke got out of his shackles. After all it was an item that even a skilled earth arts user could not break easily.

"Y-You! How did you do it?!"

Soldiers prepared their spears … and their target disappeared.

"Wh-what is this?"

Princess stood dumbfounded, staring at the place that her soldiers were just standing at. A huge hole has opened there.

When customizing something as big as planets' surface, it was treated as a map and customization power only worked at a fixed distance from the place that Yuusuke has touched.

Customizing a house, its structure, doors, windows, and even roof were treated as separate items, but it was possible to customize them at the same time as an item group.

Incidentally customization on flowing water, such as rivers, had to be performed fast or it got canceled as the water, which was being customized, has flowed away. Cancellation could be avoided for a short while by moving along the flow.

The city of Sanc Adiet, despite being separated into districts, was treated as a huge pyramid shaped pile of stone. Yuusuke's customization power recognized this city as several different objects joined as a single item group.

As long as it was recognized as one item, there were no limitations on customization that could be performed. When used like this, customization power could be used as a weapon. Today was the first time that Yuusuke has decided to use his power in battle and, as his first battle maneuver, he created a pitfall.

"In the past, this man attacked an innocent powerless father and child. He's one of the murderers!"

Yuusuke pointed at the green haired man, who was still silently lying on the ground. As Yuusuke was explaining in detail of what he heard from Zeshald, the man's face became stiff. Suspicion also appeared in princess Violet's eyes as she started eyeing the wind user.

"Damn! Brat! You are also their comrade!"

"-!!"

Half-crazed, the man shouted, cast a wind blade and directed towards Yuusuke. Yuusuke raised his hand in a similar motion, and activated customization for the stone pavement he did a little while ago.

With a dull sound, a stone wall emerged in front of Yuusuke. Having had its divine arts resistance status buffed up, the wall stopped the wind blade, scattering it in all directions.

“Wha?!”

Divine art to freely manipulate earth and to join rock into a shape that resembled a golem, belonged to the earth manipulation type divine arts. But the divine art to instantly create holes, that can swallow people or to raise a stone wall in a blink of an eye was unheard of.

The soldiers of the fire god corps and the spectators who managed to avoid falling into the pitfalls, were also left speechless by the man that threw the wind blade.

“Haaa!!”

After a moment of silence, Yuusuke kicked the wall of stone he had created. He performed a simple customization on the walls base for it to fall forward.

Since the target the pitfalls were meant for did not stay in one place for a long time, and since the pitfalls had to be hidden (for them to be effective), Yuusuke has decided to attack with the walls themselves .

“Damn, using some strange divine arts!”

The wind user jumped backwards to avoid the falling wall and attempted to flee. Since Yuusuke had no other means to attack while the wall was falling, he restricted the fleeing man by erecting other walls in succession.

Yuusuke was coordinating his walls with the pitfalls, to restrict wind users movements and vision. At the same time, he was paying attention towards the spectators as to avoid hurting them in the process. Unfortunately for Yuusuke, who was a novice in fighting, such concern was equal to negligence.

Such method of fighting, while being aware of the surroundings, often increased the difficulty and carnage. Only those with confidence and experience could afford to resort to such way of fighting. Yuusuke, being brought up in calm and peaceful environment, was being naïve.

“Whoa!”

With a sound of a propeller, a wind blade flew close to Yuusuke’s head, damaging his face and shoulder. Since Yuusuke was the one erecting the walls, the wind user was attacking him with the wind blades before his path of retreat was completely closed off.

Since the trajectory of the blades was hard to see, reasonably powerful wind blades, fired in quick succession, was a threat.

Erecting walls around himself, Yuusuke took a defensive stance. Several of the wind blades were scattered by the walls, but Yuusuke left an amateurish blind spot.

Defensive walls could not protect from attacks coming from above. After hearing the sound of wind, Yuusuke dodged immediately, but, as the attack grazed his side, he lost balance and fell.

As Yuusuke tumbled outside of the protection range of the defensive wall, the wind user has raised his hand over his head, preparing to deal the finishing blow. The moment he raised his hands his body was covered in flames.

“You….”

“My name is Violet, not You. Also I am not stupid, no matter how I look at him, that guy is strange.”

As Yuusuke raised his eyes, Violet snapped her fingers again as she ordered to arrest the wind user.

9. Commoner District Gate Plaza

“Sun, are you all right?”

“……Yes.”

As wind users were ventilating the city, by making wind blow the foul stench of burnt human out, Yuusuke, worried about Sun, asked the girl about her condition while a city guard, skilled in healing type water arts, was healing him. As they wanted to quickly change out of their torn clothes, they needed a place where they could change.

According to the game that Yuusuke’s power was based on, if you customized a piece of equipment, it was automatically unequipped.

Sun was currently wearing a mantle of the fire guard corps, which princess Violet had provided for her, over her torn clothes. [“That’s unexpected”], thought Yuusuke, as he was looking at them.

“Ahahahahah—Krielov, why are you down there?~”

After ordering the city guards to heal Yuusuke and free Sun, Violet was rolling on the ground, laughing, as she was peering into a huge hole in the gate plaza. Krielov was the only member of the fire guard corps that was swallowed by the ground, as he was the first to respond, in an attempt to restrain Yuusuke, when he broke his shackles.

The hole was about 2 meters deep. It ran through the pavement of the lower district, down until the city foundation. Even if the hole was not deep, it was somewhat difficult for the armored soldiers to crawl out of it.

These walls were not [produced] or [materialized] by Yuusuke’s power – he [created] them by customizing the stone pavement and the city foundation.

“It is not befitting of a princess to laugh with an open mouth”, replied Krielov, staying true to his professional duties, as Violet, looking at him from above, was clearly enjoying herself. He was standing at the bottom of the hole, with his back at the wall, thinking about the divine art that could create such pitfall.

He did not fall into a pitfall. It was as if a wall suddenly appeared before him, when, in reality, he appeared at the bottom of the hole. For a moment, he saw beads of light dancing around him, but they vanished almost instantly. [“What in the world is this divine art”], he thought, as he could not comprehend the phenomenon. While he was in the hole, several more people fell into it by themselves.

[“A combination of every kind of divine art, eh….?”]

Krielov, and everyone else who were in the hole with him, suddenly were made to leave it. After being surrounded by faint beads of light, they were suddenly standing outside of the hole. Moreover, it felt like

they did not move a step, and the bottom of the pitfall itself moved, until it leveled up with surface of the gate plaza.

After clearing up the holes and the walls, and returning gate plaza to its previous state, Yuusuke, protecting Sun behind him, stood in front of Violet. He asked Violet about the circumstances of the current incident. Soldiers stirred, as Yuusuke breached the etiquette again, asking member of the royalty directly when her aide was nearby. Yet, this time, Krielov overlooked Yuusuke's actions.

Soldiers of the fire god corps and the city guard, who had to prostrate themselves and lower their eyes when speaking with the royalty, were calmed down by a simple gesture by the princess, meaning:

["Everything is fine, ignore it"].

"You truly are a terribly rude man. You should show at least some respect to me, a royal princess."

"Respect is not something you can simply get from others."

Violet smiled, agreeing to the comment, and explained that this situation was caused by the complaint of the man, who was apprehended, after being cooked to medium rare (burnt) a little while ago.

Violet told Yuusuke, that her party came to Rufk village after a complaint that there was someone collaborating with a Blue Garden spy. As Yuusuke was listening to this, for a brief moment, he remembered Reifold. Yuusuke was suspicious of why Reifold showed himself in the forest back there, letting Yuusuke know about the events, that were happening in the village.

"Well, in the end, it turned out to be a fake complaint. He obviously did that with the intention of making up to me."

Hearing how Violet planned to visit the village incognito to look for information about Zeshald, but after receiving a complaint from that man, an official order was given to the city guards, and having been a participant in the later events, Yuusuke muttered in shock:

"So, after all, you are the main cause. Moreover, the false charges… This is no joke!"

"Hmph, I told you that I had no intentions of treating any of you roughly."

"I wonder about that… That aside, shouldn't you at least take us back to the village?"

Going with a simple wagon, Rufk village was half a day's distance away from Sanc Adiet. As Yuusuke looked at the setting sun, he decided, that it would be unlikely for them to return to the village like this today. Thus, he attempted to get Violet to make up for the troubles, she had caused earlier.

"That man's story was fake and the charges will be dropped. Still, Yuusuke, your violent actions have caused injuries to the city guard."

"Eeeeh?"

As he did not remember fighting anyone, but the wind user, Yuusuke let out an awkward sound. Violet, with a huge smile appearing on her face, then explained to him that several people fell into the traps he created during the fight.

People, standing where the pitfalls used to be, have also confirmed princess' words. Those that stood where the holes appeared, only reported "Suddenly seeing a stone wall before them and receiving no harm", however, some of the remaining people, who were near the holes, have slipped and fell down, receiving various contusions.

"Eeeh, is that really my fault?"

"It's not that I don't understand your feelings, but did you really have to start fighting there?"

Placing all the blame on the apprehended man, and leaving him to the city guards, Yuusuke did not expect his actions would cause such an uproar .

It was the truth that in his anger, he did not consider the feelings of the guards, and, as he had no trust in Violet or the guards, he decided to fight alone.

"Although you should be punished for this, it would leave me with a heavy conscience… so, what should I do…?"

"…"

Violet glanced at Yuusuke from over her shoulder, waiting for his reaction. Sun, who was standing nearby, looked at Yuusuke with a worried face, and then shifted her eyes towards the princess. Not wanting to look threatening or childish, Violet issued a strange condition:

"Oh, that's right, I order you to have fun with me."(NOTE: might be 'entertain me', but Yuu's response fit 'have fun' better)

Because of her social position in the city, Violet had the authority to write such crimes off. According to Zeshald's theory, Yuusuke held the divine arts (or blessings) of all four great gods, so he had the qualifications to be together with someone of the fire god caste.

In the rare cases that someone had the ability to use two divine arts, they usually preferred the social status, the higher tier divine art entitled them to.

Violet was captivated by Yuusuke's divine arts, capable of creating holes in the pavement and erecting walls, and she had no intention of punishing the black haired youth in the first place. She was enjoying herself, thinking of how it would inconvenience everyone in the city if Yuusuke could create endless walls, turning Sanc Adiet into a maze.

"Eh, saying such things… I don't have such experience and… I think, it's not possible to do it with someone, you don't love."

For a moment, Violet was engrossed by Yuusuke, as he acted like a shy young girl (NOTE: nervously wriggled while appearing to shine … something like:goo.gl/vMjln6)… but after a moment, she realized the meaning of what she said a minute ago…

"Yo-you IDIOT! I did not mean it like that!"

"It was a joke anyways~"

Yuusuke casually replied Violet, whose face was red, as she was trying to object that, saying:

“I am not that kind of a loose woman”.

“Y-you! Are you asking to be burnt to cinders?”

Yuusuke surveyed the gate plaza behind Violet, as she was trembling, tightly clenching her fist. Since the apprehended man was already taken away, some of the soldiers appeared to be resuming their patrol. As the onlookers also started leaving the plaza, it became a spacious and quiet place.

“Can you get the soldiers and the bystanders to move a little bit, towards that side?”

“Hm? What are you thinking of doing?”

Violet was trembling from the excitement, thinking of what will Yuusuke do, as she sensed an activation of a divine art, when Yuusuke started moving his finger in the air. She ordered the divine fire corps to clear the requested space of city guards and spectators.

Krielov, silently watching the events unfold, could not believe the change princess has shown compared to the pathetic mood she was in since morning. Thankful for this, he allowed Yuusuke to do as he pleased, for now.

As he had various divine arts mixed within him, for the time being, treating him equally to a fire arts user seemed to be a good decision. Krielov decided to overlook as much as he could for “Princess Violet’s entertainment”. In a short while, he has come to regret not stopping Yuusuke, when he had the chance.

“Copy-paste, copy-paste… Stairs should also have a handrail… like this?”

As he was customizing it, the structure still had only a rough shape, and was in no way usable, as small details still needed precise adjustments. After thinking by himself, Yuusuke has come up with a customization that would provide the princess with the entertainment she sought.

“After I helped him to clear the plaza, what in the world is he doing over there?”

“I wonder … I don’t understand Yuusuke’s divine arts that well myself.”

Sun could only explain that Yuusuke was moving his finger like this every time, he seemed to use his divine arts. She stayed true to her promise and did not say anything about things, she saw Yuusuke do this before, like changing the flavor of the food, redesigning tables or chairs, or creating new clothes from worn out clothes, shoes, and fabric.

“Okay. Check… there seems to be no problems. With this be all right?”

After using preview function to check the customize data for errors, Yuusuke confirmed, that his creation will not fall down, collapse under its own weight, or, possibly, sink. He then started walking towards the center of the plaza and called the two girls.

“Sun, come here.”

“Okay.”

After being called with a gentle voice, [tap tap tap] Sun ran towards Yuusuke’s side with light trot.

“You too, come over here for a bit.”

“Hey! What’s with the different treatment here?”

Being called out so rudely again, Violet shook her hands while perking up her shoulders, yet she still stood in front of Yuusuke with a slightly amused appearance. The three of them, standing leisurely in the middle of the gate plaza, were looked at by the city guards and remaining onlookers, who were expecting something to happen.

Yuusuke pushed the [execute] button while basking in the attention along with the two ladies.

“Execute!”

The scenery before their eyes changed abruptly. The middle class district, which was surrounded with a tall wall, followed by the noble’s district, which was surrounded by the even taller wall. At the top of the city, a palace towered above the districts. In an instant, all of them disappeared, and all, that could be seen, was the empty sky and the Fonclank plains, stretching off into the horizon. Cold wind, peculiar to high places, was blowing through the three people.

“Whooooooa! Whaaaaaat happened!!!!”

“I tried to create a viewing tower.”

The tower was around 80 meters high. “I was right, you actually enjoy high places”, thought Yuusuke, looking at Violet, who gasped from admiration, overlooking the scenery from the edge of the tower that was towering above the palace.

The tower looked be made from stone, but the actual material was customized to be as durable as steel. The necessary material was taken from the stockpile of the nearby quarry that was used for city expansion.

Bystanders in the plaza froze for a while, mouths agape, everyone’s eyes directed towards the tower that suddenly appeared in the gate plaza, which seemed to be piercing the heavens.

“Y-Your highness! Are you aaall riiight?!~~ Princeeess Viiioleeet?!”

Coming back to his senses, Krielov shouted towards the top of the tower, from where he heard his princess’ voice. Violet responded by poking her head over the tower’s railing and waving her hand. Krielov felt the chills, seeing Violet lean out so far from the tower of such height, that he could barely recognize the red haired girls figure.

“Heeyy! Kreeeiiilooov! Look at this, it is sooo taaaall!”

“Heeey beee caareefuuul! Don’t leeaan oouut soo muuch!”

Finally seeing Violets face, Krielov was able to calm down. He started thinking about the problems that the building, which was higher than the palace itself, would cause after being built in the commoner district. Still, Yuusuke’s divine art, capable of erecting such a building in an instant, weighted on his mind above all the other problems.

[“Why did Zeshald leave a man of such strength behind?”]

As the amount of spectators in the gate plaza increased, so did the depth of the wrinkles between Krielov’s eyes, more and more of which appeared on his face every day.

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“You’re the best! Will this building continue to stand here forevermore?”

“Well, I created it to be durable, so there is no danger of it falling anytime soon.”

“Right… I had a lot of fun. Your divine arts are really interesting.”

“Thank you for the flattery.”

Resting areas have been created at every fifth floor of the staircase, connecting the viewing platform and the tower base.

Violet was in a good mood, listening to Yuusuke, who was explaining in simple terms that these resting areas, along with the small windows, were necessary to provide the illumination, without which the staircase would be pitch black.

Before long, sun started to set, so Yuusuke and the girls began their long trip down the stairs.

“Ah, my legs are so stiff.”

“I have to say that going down is pretty tiresome. Are you all right, Sun?”

“Yes, I am perfectly fine.”

As Yuusuke and Violet were catching their breath, Sun did not seem tired at all. The [artless] girl blushed slightly at the two people, who were admiring her stamina that she gained from her life in the countryside. As it became completely dark, a carriage from the palace arrived to escort them.

“Stay at the palace for tonight. I will order the servants to prepare a room.”

“That sounds too formal… It’s all right, we will stay the night at some inn in the city.”

“You can’t do that!”

“Even if you say that …”

Despite not knowing the proper manners of the palace, the two were brought there by Violet for the night.

10. The End of the “Two Days – One Night” Turmoil

Having decided that the tower will be open to everyone, a guard was stationed at the entrance to control the amount of visitors, as too many people entering the structure at once posed to be dangerous.

A lot of people, who wanted to try climbing the tower that suddenly appeared there, crowded the gate plaza that was usually empty at this time. Merchants have already started recruiting earth arts users, capable of creating small copies of the tower structure to be sold as souvenirs. Healing type water arts

users also used this chance to sell their services, as they positioned themselves on the resting areas and sold the recovery services for the climbers.

Meanwhile Yuusuke and Sun, who were half-forcefully taken to the palace, were resting in a huge, luxurious room.

After eating dinner, which was served for them in their room, Yuusuke went to a different room to rest, trying to shake the heavy thoughts that were partly worry, and partly anxiety away. It was not that he could not trust the people living in the palace after the recent incidents, but he did not believe that every important individual in the palace would be as open hearted as Violet.

“They looked unique in some sort of way….. I mean they looked eccentric.”

“Did anyone tell you that?”

Yuusuke was startled by an unexpected voice as he was talking to himself while circling around the room.

As he turned towards the door, Violet was standing there with Sun, who had been taken along. Princess was wearing a red dress, but she had let the twin-tails down,leaving her figure framed by her long, red hair. Sun was wearing a long one-piece dress. Having gotten used to seeing the girl in the village clothes she was always wearing, seeing Sun in an open dress was certainly a refreshing sight for him. Noticing Yuusuke’s gaze, Sun, ashamed, attempted to cover her chest.

“Hmmmmmmm… Wheeeere do you think you are looking at, Yu-u-su-ke?”

Having let her beautiful, silky, red hair down, Violet looked like a graceful and refined princess of a kingdom, yet inside she was definitely the same old cheeky girl.

“Don’t even bother, Violet… By the way, what happened? Why are the two of you together?”

“I brought you some dessert. Oh, and I also wanted to talk with you for a little while more.”

As the two girls entered the room, they were followed by a maid, clad in full maid uniform, who, after saying, “Excuse me”, entered the room while pushing a trolley used for delivering food. She arranged the plates filled with juicy fruits, and then poured honey on top of the dishes. This was Violet’s favorite dessert.

“Wooow, this sure looks sweet!”

“Hey, mind your manners.”

Sun laughed at Yuusuke who waited patiently for the dessert to be served and was now grumpy, complaining to Violet:

“This princess really has no manners.”

As soon as the servant disappeared in the corridor, they three started enjoying the dessert.

“How is it? It’s tasty, right?”

“Mhhhm, how about it Sun, are you enjoying it?”

“Uhm… Don’t you think this honey is really sweet ?”

Violet did not usually eat a dessert as sweet as this – she ordered to make it sweeter as to impress them. Thus, she now tilted her head at their unexpected reactions. Yuusuke seemed to be slightly disappointed by the food, while Sun somehow seemed to talk only about the honey.

“What’s wrong, did your lips got stuck together with the honey? Or is it that you can’t appreciate the taste?”

“No, it’s… somehow the dessert seems to be lacking the harmony of taste. It feels like anmitsu (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anmitsu) that was made to be too sweet.“ (NOTE: in original it was called あんま味. After discussing it with my teacher I decided to leave Anmitsu here)

“These fruits, they seem to taste a lot like the rara fruits. They look like freshly ripened fruits that just became edible, but I grew too accustomed to the ones, prepared by Yuusuke.”

Yuusuke has opened the customization menu and, while Sun tried to delicately phrase her thoughts, has changed the sweetness parameter of the fruits to his personal setting. Noticing light effects fluttering around the dessert, Violet turned towards Yuusuke with a blank expression.

“Here, try it.”

“Mhnm.”

Yuusuke took a bit of the customized dessert and pushed it into Violet’s mouth.

“What’s this superb taste? Isn’t this an entirely new dish? “ – Mumbled princess with a full mouth.

Violet could not believe the extent of Yuusuke’s divine arts that made him capable of even such feats. She knew of water arts that allowed to control the moisture of the food, but it was her first time seeing an art that affected food on such a grand scale.

“Can you do anything else? What other things can you do with your divine arts?”

“Hm? Mmmmmmm… If it is not much, I guess I can also modify the clothes.”

Yuusuke became worried that he might have revealed a bit too much about the truth of his real capabilities, as the princess came to him while leaning forward from the curiosity. As his power had a lot of peculiarities, he thought it would be better to spare her the details. Having decided on that, he changed the topic.

“It looks like someone has released an evil beast in the nearby fields. I guess the only ones to do something like that around here are those guys from the Blue Garden.”

There was also the matters related to Zeshald. Lowering her voice, Violet told them about the damages that Blue Garden harassment has brought upon them.

Blue Garden has blocked off nearly all of the main roads in the border regions, making peddlers from foreign countries take long detours. This resulted in stagnation of money circulation and instability of prices, and it seemed that this situation would not be resolved in the near future.

“Father seems hesitant to use force, bureaucrats are also useless, and now Zeshald has gone over to their side…”

Violet sighed, resting her chin on her hand. She seemed to have discouraged herself with those words.

Her unhappy expression, along with her well featured face and dignified look, gave off some sort of mysterious aura when viewed from the side. Her closed, red eyes that always radiated determination, and her hunched small form that still retained childish features, looked very frail for a moment, and made Yuusuke feel that he wanted to protect her.

Having thrown a piece of honey covered fruits into her mouth by a precise throw, she spoke with a full mouth:

“I will order a carriage to bring you back to your village tomorrow after breakfast. Rest well tonight.”

“We will accept your offer.”

After finishing the dessert, the two girls left Yuusuke’s room. As Sun’s room was next to the one they just left, Violet said her goodbyes and returned to her room in the upper floor.

“You also go and get some rest, Sun.”

“Okay… Uhm, Mr. Yuusuke.”

Sun hesitantly approached Yuusuke, gently held his hand for a moment, and then quickly drew it back. Last time Sun willingly touched Yuusuke was when she was washing his feet. The true meaning of this gesture was, [“I trust you”].

“Good night Mr. Yuusuke.”

“A… ah.. gnight.”

Trailing Sun with his eyes as she entered her room, Yuusuke also returned to his room, bewildered.

[“What the heck was that?”]

***

The next morning, after finishing the breakfast that was served again in their rooms, Yuusuke and Sun went down to the first floor of the palace and climbed into a carriage that was waiting for them accompanied by a group of soldiers. Sun was wearing the city clothes that she got as a souvenir. Sadly, the clothes which were torn yesterday, seemed to have been disposed of.

“Heeeey~~! Wait a bit Yuusuke!”

“Your highness! Running like that is improper!”

Soldiers, who were slowly preparing the carriage for departure, saw Violet noisily running towards them, followed by Krielov who was scolding her, and became visibly tensed and quickly corrected their postures.

“Do the same thing that you showed me last night to these as well?”

“Heh~”

Sun could not hide her amusement seeing Violet holding a basket of high class rara fruits in her hands.

There were eight large rara fruits in the basket. Having customized seven of them to be sweet, Yuusuke changed the spiciness parameter of the last one, before returning it to the basket.

“It seems one of them was a failure.”

“What? Which one?”

Seeing Yuusuke say that with a smirk on his face, Sun shoulders started to shake from the amusement as she has also eaten one of those once before. Sun could only manage to eat one third of that fruit. Violet, confused by their amusement, was looking forward to the desert, this time with slight anticipation.

“I was pleased with you two. Come to play with me again, Yuusuke.”

“I might come again if I have business in the city.”

Soldiers bustled, protesting against a flat out refusal to their princess’ invitation. Krielov also formed a complicated expression. Even if this mysterious person did not think much of visiting the palace, he could have made his intentions clear in a more subtle way.

***

Having left the palace and riding through the city in the carriage, Yuusuke talked to Sun about what they will do after returning to the village.

“Miss Bahana is probably worried sick.”

“Uhm… She is giving her all when it comes to protecting me.”

They discussed about various things, such as going to aunt Bahana’s place as soon as they return to the village, watering their field, or what happened to the fish that was left behind. Unconsciously, the distance between them shrunk to an arm’s reach, a far cry from two days ago, when they could not even be near each other.

Finally, the city guard carriage, which seemed to fly on the highway, has brought them back to Rufk village before noon.

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Unfortunately for the young man, princess Violet was also fond of spicy food, thus having tasted the fruit that he labeled as [“a failure”], she got hooked on the new flavor. Moreover, this taste could only be created through the usage of Yuusuke’s divine arts.

“I want to meet Yuusuke…”

Hearing Violet silently say things like this to herself only caused Krielov’s worries to pile up.

“Uuuugh… So did sir Zeshald intended this person to get close to the princess all along…? It’s impossible, but still…”

Various misunderstandings, that were caused by the black haired youth recently, made the close aide feel butterflies in his stomach.

11. Pave the Way

A few days after the incident, the villagers warmly celebrated the safe return of the two youths. After this incident Sun has grown stronger (NOTE: [after the rain falls, the ground hardens] was the proverb used in the original sentence) and started being more open around Yuusuke. Reifold also has not appeared before him since that time at the riverside, so the young man was busy with his life in the peaceful village.

Having slept in late, Yuusuke entered the living room as soon as he washed his face in a water bowl, which was placed in his bedroom, to wake himself up.

“Why was it there?”

“Oh, you are finally awake. You are such a sleepyhead, Yuusuke.”

“Ah, good morning Mr. Yuusuke. Shall I serve you breakfast?”

For some reason Violet was sitting at the breakfast table. Krielov’s figure could also be seen near the front door.

“Still, this [fried] food is also very delicious. Did you create it as well, Yuusuke?”

“Since the ingredients were there… that’s not the point!”

After tasting the palace food, Yuusuke had cooked this dish feeling nostalgic for something slightly more elaborate to eat. Thus, he managed to cook something from the fish that he has left with Bahana before he went to the capital. After adding in flour, eggs, and cooking oil, he customized the ingredients in turns, and created a dish with a splendid grill flavor.

Unlike the sweetness parameter of the rara fruits, aside from creating fine flour from wheat grains, the rest of the dish preparation could be performed without relying on customization. On that very same day the recipe has spread within the village, and now it has become a standard cuisine of every household, with each of them coming out with their own flavor.

“Weeeell, it’s all right. Sit down for now, we will talk about the important stuff after the meal. Sun, bring Yuusuke something to drink.”

“Why are you ordering around here?”

It seemed that the day would be difficult from the early morning. Yuusuke sat at the table with his head down dejectedly. For now he filled his stomach with deep fried potatoes, deep fried meat with vegetables, and squeezed rara juice. As a side fact, rara juice could be fermented into fruit wine.

The good quality, delicious product was conveniently called [Rara wine], and could be sold for quite a good price.

***

After a small break following breakfast, Violet began to talk:

“Then, about my reason for visiting you today.”

“It’s not about the sweet rara fruits, is it?”

“That was part of the reason,” replying to Yuusuke’s sudden interruption, Violet took out a letter sealed with the royal seal. By pulling up and down on the edges, she opened the letter and started reading it.

“In light of your recent achievements, you are provided with an opportunity to join public service in my name: Esvobus Volance the Eighteenth.”

“What is this?”

“Simply speaking, it is a letter of summoning.”

Even though the letter contained an invitation to serve in the palace, the message also implied that the recipient was being called to “serve the country.” Basically it was an order for Yuusuke. After drinking the squeezed rara juice in one gulp, Yuusuke scowled while sitting on the chair cross-armed.

“I want to say that I don’t care about it… but can you tell me about it in detail?”

“Uhm, since it’s you, I did not expect you to agree to this easily.”

Two days later, Yuusuke’s summoning became a hot topic amongst the bureaucrats. Of course, the watchtower, which became the highest building in Sanc Adiet, was not officially recognized by the palace. And yet, there were protests coming from the inhabitants of the middle class and noble’s districts who could not tolerate the existence of a taller building, calling it “outrageous”, thus posing a problem in the commoner district.

Their proposal to erect similar structures in their districts was denied with:

“A repeat of the outrage of the commoner district shall not be tolerated.”

As the tower was built for princess Violet, and with it becoming a popular tourist attraction that brought in profit, there were no calls to demolish the structure in the near future. However, if the inhabitants of the middle and nobles districts were allowed to have their way, it would set a bad example that could affect the caste system that the country was based on.

There was also the matter that the builder of the tower was related to Zeshald, who recently defected to the Blue Garden, which weighed down on the bureaucrat’s minds. They were afraid that the instigators, calling people to defect over to the Blue Garden side where caste system was abolished, would gladly put this new information to work for their propaganda, which they spread every day.

They thought that having the source of their worries, Yuusuke, serve the Fonclanc country as a palace guard, would allow them to keep their appearance. As king Esvobus decided to enlist Yuusuke in the public service during the Royal Council, Violet volunteered herself to carry out the duty of relaying the decision to the recipient.

“It matters little that you can tailor clothes and prepare food, the key ability that you have is the divine art that you used to build that tower.“

Currently, as a response to provocations, a plan to build a fortress on the border with Blue Garden is underway. It is expected that you would lend your skills in its construction. If you comply with the public service duties, Rufk village will be given a privilege of special treatment.

“Well? The proposal doesn’t sound bad, right?”

As Yuusuke was lost in his thoughts, Violet stood up, walked behind him, and twined her arms around his neck.

It seemed she was trying to use her sex appeal as a young woman to bend Yuusuke’s will, but a fourteen year old girl embracing a man in his twenties looked more like a brother that was pestered by his younger sister, who was hugging him. Smiling, Sun cast down her gaze.

“A guard, eh…?”

“As you will be serving in the palace, the pay will be good as well. You want to provide Sun with a comfortable life, don’t you?”

“What do you mean, saying random things like that… It is not like I could commute from the village.”

“As expected, there is quite a distance from here to the palace.”

As Yuusuke asked for some time to think, Violet ordered him to come to the palace with his reply after three days.

“There is no way for me to ignore it, is there?” (NOTE: lit: I still have to go down this road, dont I?)

“As I told you before, this is a written letter of summoning. Disregarding it means ignoring the king’s order.”

Disregarding a king’s order is equaled to military insubordination. As the definition is obscure, you are unlikely to be punished. Still it is not like the king’s order can be ignored.

“In that case, a different type of service will be forced on you“, added Violet.

“How troublesome…”

“He hee, well, have fun thinking about it. I will expect to hear a favorable reply from you.”

After speaking these words, Violet left their house, tightly holding her sweet and spicy exquisite rara fruits.

***

“What should I do?”

Mumbled Yuusuke, sighing in a now quiet room, while asking for Sun’s opinion. He was told that the village would also benefit from that, so it probably was not an awfully bad decision when thinking about what was best for the village. However, Sun would be left living alone by herself, should Yuusuke accept the offered position.

“Amazing Mr. Yuusuke. This is a huge promotion!”

“Uuuungh, it turns out like that after all…”

“It seems that you will also be able to come home at times, I think it’s a good offer.”

Sun seemed to perceive the governmental position in a favorable way. As for Yuusuke, just when his life with Sun has finally gotten on the right track… just as he began to enjoy it… it was too good to be true… it happened all too fast… thus his feelings were complicated.

[“Won’t you feel lonely?”]

However, unable to ask this question,Yuusuke feet as a failure of a man.

[“Yes or No, either answer would make me feel depressed”]

Thinking like that really appeared to be “fun”. After drinking whatever was left of the squeezed rara juice, Yuusuke looked at the ceiling.

***

“Oh, Yusuke. Heading off to the forest?”

“Miss. Bahana.”

The next day, Yuusuke met Bahana as he left the house while carrying the fishing tools. Yuusuke asked her if he should do his best and go to the city only because of a selfish wish to honor Sun’s feelings. Bahana’s answer to this question was:

“In case a fight broke out, you would be protected, right?”

“Probably… I was ordered to help in the construction of a fortress with my abilities. Afterwards my responsibility should be adjusting the taste of the food.”

According to Violet, king Esvobus seemed to have no intentions of sending him off to war. Yuusuke thought that after the fortress was completed, it would also make trespassing into the foreign territory difficult for the Blue Garden side.

“Well, the decision is still up to you.”

Bahana patted Yuusuke on the back, saying, “Well, think it thoroughly, before making your decision”. Yuusuke cried out. The women of this village were really strong.

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Yuusuke, who was lost in his thoughts, sat on a bench he made by customizing the earth at the bank of a streamlet running through the nearby forest, which became his standard fishing spot. Due to all the thoughts, he couldn’t concentrate. Despite that, in about thirty minutes he already caught four fish in his basket.

“Wow, your fishing hook is really awesome, I want one of these for myself.”

“Wah?! Don’t scare me like that!”

Reifold, who appeared at Yuusuke’s side without a sound, was examining the fur bait that Yuusuke had created. He seemed to be a spy for Blue Garden, who carried an otherworldly atmosphere around him, and had the ability to appear out of thin air.

“What hole did you crawl out of?”

“Fufuu, I belong to the forest tribe after all.”

Usually referred to as the [Wind artist], the wind arts user was also excessively elusive. He quickly changed the topic towards the invitation from the palace. Yuusuke instantly started questioning things like how much did he know. He wondered if the fact that he would become a palace official would trouble Blue Garden and force them to make a move.

“That’s right, you can instantly raise a giant fortress with your divine arts. That is why I must get rid of you…”

“?!”

Yuusuke immediately prepared for a fight. Opening a customization menu by concentrating, he called out [Customization status for the map item] that he practiced many times just in case he needed to fight. He instantly erected multiple defensive walls around himself, as well as trap zones similar to the pitfalls he has used before.

“What’s this, what’s this? The aura you have looks really dangerous. I specialize in relaying information. Unrefined jobs like assassination are outside my field of specialties.”

“Hey, listen to yourself…”

Reifold sat down on the bench, interested in the walls that Yuusuke had erected around him.

“Say, how effective are they?”

“Want to try them out yourself?”

Grinning, Reifold manipulated wind, creating a golem by collecting nearby leafs and fallen branches. Yuusuke watched him, thinking, “So it is possible to do things like that too.” Through the use of wind pressure, the golem was made to look humanoid. Just as it entered the trap zone it stepped on the thin cover of the pitfall and fell in.

Immediately after that, several protective walls slid down into the hole, falling onto the trapped golem. The bottom of the pitfall became a mix of shattered branches and pieces of earth.

“Whaa, that was pretty harsh. I didn’t notice the pitfall over there.”

Showing complete ignorance on the tragic fate of his golem, Reifold shook his shoulders. His attention focused to one of the walls, the wind user touched the cover of another pitfall with the tip of his boot. Again, trap activated and the wall fell down on the hole. This wall did not break and became a bridge over the trap.

“So, you are becoming a castle official?”

“It was too sudden. I am troubled over making the decision.”

“Oh? Would it hurt to try working for the country?”

“Why?”

Since refusing the offer would be in favor of the Blue Garden, rather than receiving duties and responsibilities, it would be better to argue for a more profitable offer. Yuusuke's attempt to pry on how much this man knew was splendidly avoided by the self-called member of the forest tribe.

"Whichever road you choose, it would better come with rewards and favors."

"Hmmm."

Truly, Yuusuke wondered what did Reifold had to gain from talking to him like this.

"Say, why did you…. did he leave already?!"

Just like last time, Reifold disappeared as suddenly as he came. He also took one of Yuusuke's fur baits, as well as some information regarding his divine arts.

***

That night, enjoying an evening meal comprised of finely sliced chicken, a salad with some dressing of cube sliced rara fruits, and grilled small fish, Yuusuke talked to Sun about his plans to travel to Sanc Adiet the next day.

"Understood. In that case I should wake you early, right?"

"Ah, Thanks"

Yuusuke could hardly say that he was already used to handling a wagon. Still, he had no choice but to somehow manage to drive it alone. As he only had to head straight on the highway up until the city, the trip tomorrow did not worry him too much.

As they stopped talking, the sound of the tableware and the crunching sound, heard when eating fried food, were the only sounds present in the living room.

"Mr. Yuusuke?"

"Eh? Wh-What is it?"

Being talked to so suddenly, Yuusuke staggered for a moment. Sun was worried about Yuusuke from the depths of her heart as she said, while smiling awkwardly:

"I will be all right. Certainly it will be sad living alone, but such things also happened often when I was living with teacher."

Given that there were times when the house got empty due to Zeshald going on a long trip, Bahana often worried about her, and having gotten the chance to feel the same way, Sun wanted to give her all as she said those things to Yuusuke. Still… that was a somewhat embarrassing experience for her.

"Teacher has told you that with time, you will become a person that will move the world."

"The world, eh…?"

"Because of that, you need to use every chance to learn more about the world."

"……"

Remembering Zeshald's words, Yuusuke was also reminded of his vague reason for appearing in this world.

After all, he was the [Evil God], an existence called here from another world. What is he supposed to accomplish? Why was HE called here? No matter how much he thought about it, he could not come up with the answers, so the only way left to find them was to continue living in this world and broadening his knowledge.

"You're right…"

After finishing their meal, until the time they went to sleep they did not say a single word to each other.

***

The next day….

Before the morning mist lifted, Yuusuke, with a change of clothes in a small backpack, sat on the driver's seat of the wagon. The only one to see him off was Sun, who had woken him up. If he became a palace guard, he would probably be unable to return to the village for a while.

Yuusuke, trying to think of an appropriate way to bid Sun goodbye, finally exchanged a simple greeting with Sun.

"I'm heading off, Sun."

"Good luck, Yuusuke."

Thus Yuusuke, riding Zeshald's wagon, left Rufk village and disappeared into the morning fog, towards Sanc Adiet.

12. Volance Castle

Unlike Zeshald or the god corps, he did not possess the water arts necessary to restore the fatigue of the horses, thus, resulting in several breaks along the way. By the time he arrived to the city, it was already dusk.

"I didn't expect it to take so long when traveling normally....."(Yuusuke)

Yet again, Yuusuke began to feel the difference in power that comes with the absence of a particular divine arts. He headed towards the nearby lookout stable, ran by the [artless], to park his carriage, and walked towards the soldier's guardroom at the gate square where the observation tower stood. From there, it was possible to contact the people of the palace.

"Oh, it's you. I have heard about you from the higher ups."(Soldier)

The soldier at the guardroom transmitted the message to the palace about Yuusuke's visit, in the interim a welcoming carriage came over. The carriage that Yuusuke boarded drove past the middle districts and entered the noble district, where it headed towards one of the four main entrances to the palace, which is located at the lowest floor used mainly by the god corps.

Currently, three parts of the first floor of the inner palace is occupied by the kitchen, the servants' quarters is located in the basement, and the general guards' dormitory covers the rest of the first floor. The commanding officer and vice commanding officer of the guard corps uses the 2nd floor entrance, the living quarters for the officers is also located at the 2nd floor.

The 3rd floor entrance is being used by the bureaucrats, where their private lodging rooms are located on the same floor. The highest entrance floor, which was the fourth floor entrance is prepared for royalties and dignitaries, is where Yuusuke and his group previously stayed at.

Located on the 5th floor is a huge terrace with a large hall used to hold parties, the 6th floor is an atrium. Leading up to the 7th floor from the 4th floor, is a long staircase where the "fire god corps" the elites of the palace guards are stationed. Also the maids who specifically served the royalties uses these stairs.

The 8th floor is a vast audience room and a place to enjoy the sideshows. The 9th floor is the royal residence. It is lined up with various rooms and facilities such as bedrooms and educational rooms. And on the peak which is the 10th floor is the private quarters of the King. There is also a location for the concubines and singing princesses, but currently it is not being used much.
(TL: singing princesses aka prostitutes)

Amongst the maids gossip, currently King Esvobus does not have any dependable concubine surrounding him.

As Yuusuke descended from the carriage, he was greeted by Violet, who was accompanied by the crimson mantle flame gods corps, as she turned up with a completely familiar pigtail hairstyle.

"So you came, Yuusuke. Have you make your decision?"(Violet)
"Oh, It's been decided that it's an officer position."(Violet)
"Oic!"(Yuusuke)

Happily smiling, Violet immediately proceed to the signing of the contract documents she had prepared. Yuusuke only knew chinese characters, kanji, hiragana, and alphabets but for some odd reason, he seemed to understand the Lunar characters common language of Kaltcio, and is able to write his name in chinese and lunar characters.

"Ng? What's this, it looks like some sort of emblem."(Violet)
"It's my unique writing."(Yuusuke)

Violet tilted her head and stared blankly at Yuusuke, but after hearing that it was a character that was routinely used in the place where he and Sun lived, she replied with an "I see". Zeshald's culture study and thesis was not very detailed, thus Yuusuke was being vigilant so as to not get showered by a flood of difficult words.

"Good, very good. The formal appointment will be concluded with the audience with my father that you must attend by tomorrow. At present this should be good enough."(Violet)

Violet, as the person in charge, was wearing an atmosphere carrying the dignity of a princess. She turned around after Yuusuke handed over the official documents to her. Showing signs of instinctively correcting her attitude, Yuusuke understood that Violet's presence just did not fit her as a selfish princess.

"From today, you will be our country's soldier. Your rank will be greater than or equal to an officer in our country."(Violet)
"a, oh....."(Yuusuke)

"There are plans for placing you in a color, with special treatment."(Violet)
"That, I understand."(Yuusuke)

When Yuusuke was involuntarily pulled into a role of a 'funny man'*, Violet laughed happily.
(TL *: Tsukkomi)

"You're my favorite."(Violet)
"Is that alright, because of this....."(Yuusuke)

"Well, although there are various fellows who are jealous about this, I will be able to provide some assistance of my own."(Violet)
"Wait a minute!"(Krielov)

'I do not know if it is a good underling or a bad one', Yuusuke begin to have headaches as he thought about how Violet is abusing her power. Looking at his unwilling appearance, Krielov put a stop to the sense of intimacy between them. Deep inside he secretly let out a sigh.

"Oh, yes. You now belong to the group "Darkness God Corps". Currently it only has one member, which is you."(Violet)

In the case of Yuusuke, his divine arts is special as it doesn't have specific type. There is also the problem of his hair color, thus, the existing squad captains don't want him attached to their squad, only leaving the choice of establishing a new squad for Yuusuke.

The four god corps of the palace, [Fire God Corps], [Water God Corps], [Earth God Corps], [Wind God Corps] are to rank next to the 5th god corps, like the black hair from the calendar of darkness, the [Darkness God Corps].

The calendar of darkness is part of the Kaltcio calendar which divides 1 year into 5 calendars with 17 months, and it refers to the special fifth calendar. The calendar of fire, the calendar of water, the calendar of earth, the calendar of wind, and lastly the calendar of darkness, from the calendar of fire to the calendar of wind, each of those calendars is composed of 4 months, '1 month is 20 days'.

The way of counting the calendars goes like this, e.g. Calendar of fire for the first day, [1st day of the fire month of Volnar] and for the last day, [20th day of the wind month of Volnar].

The Calendar of Darkness is the only special month without the 1 month counter, and it is known as the festival of freedom, which starts from the honor feast until the birth of the new year, when the financial statement of that year completes that type of calendar.

"The corps uniform will be prepared immediately."(Violet)
"Do I really have to wear a mantle as well?"(Yuusuke)

Violet answered "Of Course", while Yuusuke looks towards the uniform of the Fire God Corps.

Having a Palace official wearing a cheesy looking attire will bring shame to the nation. As there are ambassadors from various countries who come to visit, they could not afford exposing the 'Elites of the Palace' with a poor appearance.

So the flashiness of the palace god corps uniform also serve such a purpose, as Yuusuke acknowledges it with a shrug.

"I will be leaving now as I have some business to attend to, after this it would be great if you listen to this person for instructions."(Violet)

In the end, on that day, the three of them spent their time in a conversation in Yuusuke's room, until it was dinner time.

Following the orders of Violet, Yuusuke was guided by a servant to a corner of the upper floor in the palace. It had a spacious interior marble corridor with humongous windows which seem to stretch on forever. On the opposite of the wall were rooms lined up for the personnel of the palace. (TL: 2nd floor of the palace for the officers)

"This innermost room is Mr.Yuusuke's."(Servant A)

"Thanks."(Yuusuke)

The room given to Yuusuke is the exactly same as the other god corp soldiers: a bed, a desk, a chair, bookshelves and a closet. It was mainly just the minimal furniture necessary for living here. To have additional furniture to decorate the room, one is supposed to purchase it with one's own money.

"There isn't any windows...."(Yuusuke)
"Yes, the oil wood for lighting is granted in fixed amount along with your pay, if there is not enough of it, you are not allowed to accept more as compensation."(Servant A)

For daily necessities, if one requires more than what one is given, the soldier would have to purchase it by themselves at their own expenses. Yusuke mutters,'It seems like the palace soldiers doesn't have any preferential treatment at all,' but he was refuted by the explaining servant, "that is outrageously wrong."

"The comparison between the elites of the palace god corps and the general god corps, the compensation that they obtained is completely different."(Servant A)
"Ooh, so it's like that, is it?"(Yuusuke)

"Yes, the palace god corps soldiers are drawing 2 times more pay than the general god corps officers in charge after all-- ah....., I am so sorry for saying something rude."(Servant A)
"Don't mind it, don't mind it, you don't need to apologize for such a thing....."(Yuusuke)

Due to the nature of Yuusuke speaking casually, the servant apologized shyly, as he had accidentally overstepped his boundaries. Standing in the front door was a curious onlooker, who heard Yuusuke and his fellow partner conversing in a humble talk, "No, not at all, it is I who should say so."

"What is making a racket here? This place isn't a playground."(Hivodir)
"Eh? Ah, Lord Hivodir."(Servant A)

Declaring in a dangerous tone, the red hair youth was wearing the uniform of the fire god corps. The servant respectfully called him Lord Hivodir. Looking at his posture, it seems like he is someone of great status, as Yuusuke nodded lightly.

"You are.... hmm I know, you're the new toy."(Hivodir)
"......?"(Yuusuke)

<< Leave us >> as Hivodir directed the servant with his hands. Bewildered by what happened, the servant bowed to the 2 people and left the scene. Hivodir smirked at Yuusuke, who was currently wearing the village clothes, and slowly took a step up and looked at Yuusuke's hair and the pupils of his eyes.

That rude staring attitude was making Yuusuke feel uncomfortable. Yuusuke let out a small frown when Hivodir started to investigate him.

"What's up?"(Yuusuke)
"Ho ho, It really is black ... ... It seems like the princess really likes it, but don't get too carried away with it."(Hivodir)

"Ha?"(Yuusuke)
"A lowly person like you, with a humble birth, doesn't deserve the cordial welcome of being part of the prestigious palace god corps."(Hivodir)

"At most, you just have to worry about her getting bored of you." Hivodir looked down on and smiled at Yuusuke, Yuusuke became angered by his words and returned with a glare. Lightning sparks could be seen as they glared at each other intensely, the air was filled with killing intent. It was currently in a state of, "Are thou going to fight me or not?"

During the middle of this critical situation, a rhythmical voice resounded through the hallways of the soldiers' personnel room, which broke the intense situation.

"Ohh, Yuusuke! Have you looked at your room yet?"(Violet)
".....Violet?"(Yuusuke)
"Ooohh, My Princess. As lovely and cheerful as usual!"(Hivodir)

Violet came running down the hallway while waving her hands. Hivodir turned around and respectfully bowed towards her direction. Yuusuke felt a little discomfort while looking at Violet's panting appearance.

"Hivodir, you are here too. What were you guys talking about?"(Violet)
"Oh, I was somehow being threatened."(Yuusuke)

Hivodir, who was using his natural noble attitude, gracefully smiled in front of Violet. Yuusuke opened his eyes wide and stared at him. For a moment, Yuusuke wanted to expose him, but he held back. Seeing Violet's doubtful expression and clouded mind, he looked back towards Hivodir.

"Pffft, Buddy, as a man do you have no Pride!"(Hivodir)
"Oh? Pride, huh? What about you who is sneaking about intimidating people from the shadows?"(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke directly gave a rebuttal to Hivodir, making him increasingly confused. Although up until now, Hivodir had many experiences in giving those 'would be' rival aristocrat rookie officers an advance warning, but this is the first time he was faced with such a retaliating correspondent.

"Well, wait Hivodir. During that time at the square.... Yuusuke was, well, unexpectedly good at debating."(Violet)
"I am not trying to start a fight here, it's just that ——"(Hivodir)

Trying not to over worry about such things, in order to protect his pride, he replied, "It's nothing." ~~ Hiding the truth and intimidating a newcomer from the shadows!? Such a great unfolding of events, what an idiot! Don't underestimate a pro gamer! ~~ (Yuusuke's pov)

"That isn't all to my character."(Hivodir)

Yuusuke laughed at what he just said. Although both of them have acquired powers due to the previous live combat, it seems that Yuusuke have build up his will greatly, allowing him to be in a talkative mode and being able to see through Hivodir's plan to rouse him up.

Although, Hivodir does have the ability to see through one's talent, but somehow this is a very subtle situation.

"I understand and understood the incident just now, let bygones be bygones."(Violet)

Violet shrugged her shoulders with an exclamation of relief, as she pacified them. Yuusuke began to feel embarrassed, as he realized that he wasn't acting very mature. He turned away with his arms folded, trying to hide his embarrassment.

"Hivodir, you too. You are of a noble blood lineage whether you like it or not. Could you not over aggravate things?"(Violet)

"Ha ha, I did not do such absurd things. This Hivodir is prideful of being one of princess's fiance candidates."(Hivodir)

"Fiance?" Yuusuke's eyes start spinning around as he thought about it, while Hivodir was full of smiles due to the sense of superiority.

"How old are you?"(Yuusuke)
"Moh? From a little while ago your speech has been impolite. I am going to be 18 this year."(Hivodir)

"How about you?(Yuusuke)
"What, you don't know? I am 14."(Violet)

Shouldn't you not ask how old is a lady? Keeping in mind of that, Violet answered him. 14 years old and 18 years old, junior high and high school students, the age known as the entry to adulthood and the age of becoming an adult. Hearing that Yuusuke groaned.

"Unn, this is so weird."(Yuusuke)

"What is?"(Hivodir)
"What is weird?"(Violet)

Intrigued by Yuusuke's strange behavior and manner of speech, before anyone noticed, Hivodir was the same as Violet, as they were enjoying the conversation with Yuusuke. Up until now there wasn't any friendship seen between those of noble status, and they are drawn into a completely new concept.

13. The First Mission of the Evil God Corps

Yuusuke's brand new lifestyle will begin from this point in his room, to indulge in laziness.
Travelling on the carriage the previous day, from dawn till dusk, had left him exhausted, and subsequently dealing with the trouble that happened within the palace didn't help either. Although he headed to bed early, due to not being accustomed to the environment, he couldn't sleep properly. When he finally slipped into his dreamland early in the morning, a heartless little demon kicked and spewed fire as she barged into his room.

"Yuusuke, It's time to wake up! This isn't the time for you to stay in bed, Wake up immediately!"(Violet)
".....Let---me---sleep---please--....."(Yuusuke)
"This is useless."(Violet)
"ummm....."(Yuusuke)

By dragging the bed, Yuusuke was being dragged out of his bed as he tumbled off, and he began to abandon his awareness to doze off again. While he was yawning and getting up lazily, Violet handed over a bundle of black cloth to him.

"This is your squad's uniform, hurry up and wear so i can see it."(Violet)
"Uniform?"(Yuusuke)

What he received was the uniform of the same design as the palace knights, although his was a black version. "Ah", Yuusuke let out, as he recalled that he was currently affiliated to the newly established Darkness god corps. As he looked back at the uniform before changing to it, it felt as though it was a cosplay costume.

"..... I will change into my clothes, but..."(Yuusuke)
"It's better to get dressed early."(Violet)

"No, it's not that...."(Yuusuke)
"What, are you being embarrassed to be seen naked as a man?"(Violet)

'You, as a woman, doesn't feel shy?' went through his mind, but he stopped and rethinked before saying anything, due to the fact that she is that violent, willful, granny-like princess. Feeling that he might be in for Violet's punishment game if he said that, Yuusuke slipped his hands through the sleeves of the new black uniform.

"Come to think of it, the thing that happened yesterday."(Violet)
"Yup?"(Yuusuke)

Yesterday, he was in a stare down competition with Hivodir before Violet came along. Using the opportunity, he diverted his anger and calmed himself down, that was when Violet, who was

uncomfortable with that situation, started questioning. He was impressed by Violet being 'quite sharp' at things.

"I heard from the servant that was guiding you about Hivodir, so I rushed over in a hurry."(Violet)
"What, so that's what happened....."(Yuusuke)

It seems that Hivodir had been putting pressure on other younger god corps fiance candidates as a form of strategy. He himself has decent divine arts power within the fire god corps, with him also being the inheritor of a prestigious lineage, the Dukes of Volce, who has close ties to the royal family.

"Well, he has his own burden to carry. His family is one of the most prestigious noble families around."(Violet)

Violet was wearing an unhappy expression while speaking about it. It seems that at times she seemed to act like an adult, as if the common opinion that "the little girl grew up so fast" had some truth to it, thought Yuusuke . While thinking about it, he remembered about Sun's encouragement on accepting the government post.

"Hooho, you look pretty good in those clothes. Though the interior is meagre."(Violet)
"Shut up .... I am not going to wear the mantle, it seems very hard to move in it."(Yuusuke)

Yusuke requested for his armor to be kept at the minimum, so his protective gear was sewn with little reinforcements to keep it as lightweight as possible. He will makeup for it by strengthening the gear through his own customization. As he looked at his reflection wearing the Black god corps uniform on the full length mirror, Yuusuke actually began to feel that his new life is starting from today.

"Okay, Let's go to my father's location for an audience right now."(Violet)
"Ehhh, right now?"(Yuusuke)

"It's because now it's a delicate time, so it would be better if you quickly get through with it."(Violet)

It is said that those bureaucrats who knew about the audience are trying to interfere by making him adhere to formalities and procedures, which were added for the so called security purposes. Yuusuke was grateful for skipping all the complicated procedures, as he was rushing alongside Violet towards the audience hall.

"Hehehe..... My own knight...."(Violet speaking silently to herself)

"Ng? Did you say something?"(Yuusuke)
"Nope, I didn't say anything. Come on, let's hurry!"(Violet)

---the 8th Floor of Volance Palace, The Audience hall.---

The throne was sitting atop a raised podium in the inner part of the hall, with huge, heavy stone pillars lined up across the enormous hall. The lights illuminated the entire hall through the tall windows, which were positioned along the wall. There were countless servants waiting in the rooms, located behind the pillars.

Standing in front of the podium, were the various captains and vice captains of the palace god corps, while standing in line, next to the King, were the various ministers and aides.

"Hey, quickly, let's go in."(Violet)

"Wait a minute! I have no clue what the proper etiquettes are when standing before the king?"(Yuusuke)
"It's better to just be your proper self."(Violet)
"Proper...."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke nervously looked towards the throne, as Violet pulled him by hand right in front of the podium. The captains and vice captains of the gods corps that were sitting in rows saw his attire and were giving out complex expressions, "that doesn't seem to be usable".

"Apparently, it seems the rumors, spread within the god corps, are true...."
"Hmm, It seems that he is also known as the Princess's pet."

They were full of anticipation when they came here to see the unique divine arts which had made that gigantic tower, but as it seems, he might not be much of use, was what they were whispering amongst themselves. In the first place, only the captain of the fire god corps, Krielov had experienced Yuusuke's power, while the rest of the captains, due to their disappointment, were showing complex expressions.

"In this occasion, you have fared well in responding to the call. Yuusuke, thou are to serve the King, and swear to become Fonclanc's knight, to protect the safety of the citizens."

"Erm, ... I swear?"(Yuusuke)

"Why does your answer seems like a question!?"(Violet)
"I told you that I have no clue what the proper etiquette is!"(Yuusuke)

Seeing Yuusuke and Violet whispering softly, the minister in charge was showing a troubled face as he turned towards the king to seek his approval.

King Esvobus waved his hands lightly as if saying <<it's all good, let's get on with it >>. He looked towards his beloved daughter, Violet, whom he always pampered. The minister shook his head and realized it's useless to debate about it, thus diving straight into the appointment ceremony.

The tray, containing the coat of arms, proof of a palace knight, lies next to the throne. King Esvobus slowly stood up and took the coat of arms into his hands. With Violet giving a slight push from behind, Yuusuke walked up the podium and knelt in front of the king.

Thus the King attached the coat of arms onto his uniform, and from this point onwards, Yuusuke was officially recognized as one of the knights, thus concluding the appointment ceremony without any incidents. After the ceremony, there was a song of the 4 great gods being sang to swear loyalty to the king. Skipping various parts of the procedures, making the appointment ceremony simple, the main point of the ceremony was to get the coat of arms that is bestowed by the king.

Amongst the captains of each corps who were looking at that appointment ceremony, yet again it seemed like another selfish request from the princess, but it seems that there wasn't any need to get involved as they did not have a problem with it.

The recent favorite of the Princess was this black haired youth who had been bestowed with the coat of arms by King Esvobus, and it seems that there were reports of him having a close relationship with Zeshald. Thus, King Esvobus was driven by the feeling of curiosity and listened to the various stories he might have had.

"Yuusuke, are you --"(King Esvobus)

"Yes?"(Yuusuke)

As he was retreating away from the throne, King Esvobus called out to him, and Yuusuke stopped in place as though his body was floating. However, it seemed that King Esvobus was hesitating to say something, and closed his mouth --

".....nothing, forget about it."(King Esvobus)

Although he wanted to call out Zeshald's name in this occasion, he held back. Holding this thought back, he held down his hands without saying a word.

"Ahh that was so nerve wracking. However, it seems that the King felt like an ordinary old man."(Yuusuke)
"Wahaha! Well, my dad does give off that kind of feeling. Did you see how much scheming those bureaucrats were doing?"(Violet)

After the appointment ceremony, Yuusuke followed Violet towards the resting rooms of the palace knights. As Yuusuke is leading the newly inaugurated group known as the Darkness god corps within the palace, he had to show his face as a new establishment to the palace knights. He was brought through the knights dining hall and bypassed the porch.
Incidentally, the carriage and horse that belonged to Zeshald, which Yuusuke had used to ride here, has been delivered back to Rufk.

"During the afternoon, you will need to head over to the construction site of the fortress, as it will become an important facility. For the time being just go and take a round trip to look at the site." (Violet)
"That's great, but is it okay for you to guide me?(Yuusuke)

"It's alright right? That's what the color is for, special treatment."(Violet)
"....although, it will be troublesome if I were to get entangled with someone like Hirvodir again."(Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke complained about it, Violet seemed to be having a lot of fun as she brought them back into the palace. As Violet was proceeding ahead, right in front of his line of sight, Yuusuke turned his head and looked behind him due to a difference in interest, as he began to feel that the introduction was tedious, but he returned to what he was doing.

In that manner, he remembered to bear in mind that it is his establishment, thus turning back. Finally he arrived at the last resting room of the god corps. Compared to the royal knights' pointlessly luxurious waiting room, this room seemed to be pretty simple, or in order words, functional, as it emits an atmosphere of 'some sort of tavern'.

Although they were in the same type of room located within the palace, Yuusuke found it peculiar that the upper floors and lower floors had a lot of differences in dignification..

"It seems like this place is as shabby as usual."(Violet)
"Well, isn't this Lady Violet! What kind of business do you need today in such a place?"

Laying down half slanted on the sofa, the commander-like soldier of the god corps jumped up in a hurry to greet Violet. The rest of the soldiers scattered the gambling bills off the table, hid their wines and began to form up in line.

"Yusuke, select people from amongst this group."(Violet)
"Eh? What do you mean?"(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke tried to protest, as there wasn't much information given to him for the selection, whereas Violet on the other hand, dismissed his protest saying,"Currently the newly founded darkness god corps only have you. For the time being, take some of these god corps soldiers as subordinates. In the future, when you go on missions, you will at least have some underlings to utilize.”

"Such an important thing should have been told before hand....."(Yuusuke)
"Setting the missions aside, in any case you will still need to have subordinates for the current construction of the fortress."(Violet)

For the construction of the fortress, wouldn't it be easy to just instantly create it, like the observation tower in the gate square? Yuusuke showed a shrug while looking at Violet.

After the completion of this mission, it seems that he will have to become a special person who changes the cuisines for Violet under the pretense of a "Special mission", but this time around, for the sake of appearance, he had to bring along some underlings.

"I can confidently say that you will be able to select about five appropriate people to bring along."(Violet)
"Appropriate?"(Yuusuke)

While the two of them were conversing with each other, the god corps soldiers were all curious about the black uniform of 'the newly founded establishment, Knights of Darkness god corps'. Hearing that they are able to get chosen and become one of the subordinates, they began to straighten their posture.

If one is being recruited by the palace knights, although the work is much tougher, one can expect better compensation even if there is easier work. Without fail they began to smile, trying to appeal their eagerness of wanting to be selected.

Yuusuke took into consideration the type of personnel that may be required during this mission. First he needed a wind arts user who could speed up the carriage and a water art user who could rejuvenate the horses. In case if the return trip happened late at night, it would be good to have a fire art user who could light the way. Other than that, he also wanted a wind user who had experience in communication, in order to send transmissions to the construction site and a water user who could attack in case of a battle.

The commander of the God corps is guy whose age is around 30 years old. He is one of the chosen fire art user, his name is Vermeer.
Another person, who is in the same God corps and holding the position of the vice captain, is a man in his mid 20s. He is an attack type water art user, his name is Shaheed.
Next is a lady in her early 20s. She is a healer type water art user, her name is Aisha.
Another lady who is in her late teens. She is a communication type wind art user, her name is Isotta.
Next is the guy in his mid 20s, who tried to hide the gambling bills just now. He is a wind art user, his name is Fonke.

Thus, these selected five will be accompanying Yuusuke, as his underlings, to the construction site. After each and everyone of them introduced themselves to Yuusuke, the group was disbanded for lunch. They were to gather at the porch to board a carriage and set off for a mission after lunch.

"Well, for the time being we have to settle our lunch. Will you head back upstairs Violet?"(Yuusuke) (TL: it's weird when he says will violet head back upstairs)
"Yea, it's a pity as I have a promise with my father."(Violet)

As it was a condition to perform the appointment ceremony earlier in the morning, they had to eat their lunch separately. Violet tried using her coaxing voice, but, as it didn't work, she ended up taking the easier

route of having a meal. 'What a foolish parent', as Yuusuke thought while worrying about the future of Violet.

"I have to say that. In the future will you be either a captivating queen or a devilish princess."
"What was that about? No .... wait, maybe it actually sounded pretty "cool"....?"

As the friendly conversation between Yuusuke and Violet filled the atmosphere, the soldiers who were all looking at them were silent in amazement. Yuusuke, who realized that they were being stared at, began to inquire Vermeer, as he was the eldest amongst his underlings. Without reservation, Vermeer begins to ask a question to him.

"Erm it's nothing much..... listening to how you called the princess, we were wondering what's the relationship between the captain and the princess."(Vermeer)
"Ah~...."(Yuusuke)

The way the captain called out to her seemed a little awkward, thought Vermeer. As Yuusuke began to consider that "Certainly it might be pretty bad to address her without honorifics". Even Hivodir, who is one of Violet's fiance candidate and holds a higher social status also called her princess.

"Lady Violet...."(Yuusuke)
"Yes?"(Violet)

Yuusuke tried to call Violet with a title, but hearing her name, Violet tilted her head and asked, "Yes?".

"Violet! Violet! Violet!Violet!"(Yuusuke)
"Wa!? What’s up with you so suddenly?"(Violet)

"Nothing, I was getting rid of the uncomfortable feeling, after uttering something in front of your name."(Yuusuke)
".....Is my name as disgusting as strong vodka?"(Violet)

It had become a habit. On top of that, even the person herself had given him special treatment, thus Yuusuke decided that it would be better to leave it as it is. Thus, he faced his underlings and answered, "Well, it's that kind of relationship."

Afternoon~~

"Hurry up and finish your mission so you can come back early."(Violet)
"Yeah, yeah..."(Yuusuke)

Violet sent off Yuusuke and his 5 underlings who boarded a god corp's carriage. Departing from the palace, they headed towards the direction of the planned construction site for the fortress. "Gear Hawk Fortress" The fortress is built on the plains, which is facing the borders of Blue garden. It's foundation is about half way complete, and even the building section has been 1/3 assembled. Although it is not yet a fully functional fortress, it still can be used a base to monitor the border, by deploying some soldiers and bringing supplies in.

"I heard that the captain built that gigantic tower instantaneously. Will you be building the fortress in the same way?"(Vermeer)
"We will have to see. As long as there is enough materials it would not be impossible."(Yuusuke)
"In...incredible..... I would like to see.....the building process."(Isotta)

As Yuusuke answered Vermeer’s question, Isotta clam her hands in front of her chest while directing her sparkling eyes toward Yuusuke.

The materials required for the fortress should be sufficient as Shadeed explained that he was previously attached as security to the site, and has returned from duty just 10 days ago. During the change of guards, they had brought large amount of materials along with replacements for duty.

Since there was enough materials to make this customization job easy, Yuusuke began to relax comfortably, as they headed towards the site.

"Captain, we can see the site."(Vermeer)
"And, I will contact them to inform about our arrival..... to let us in, okay?"(Isotta)

Even though the Gear hawk fortress is in the middle of construction, you could still see a massive, dignified silhouette built out of cobblestone, nestled in the middle of the plains. Wooden scaffolding extended out on both sides of the wall. The cobblestones that were piled up in regular intervals on the wall could also be seen.

Although the height is just midway, it is already 30m tall. Fortress from the edge to the edge was probably around 50m in length. It is such a huge building.

"Ah, ehhh..... this is weird"(Isotta)
"What's up, Isotta"(Vermeer)

Using her fingers to tap her head while trying to flap around restlessly, she tilted her neck as it seems like she was talking to herself. Vermeer, who was on the driver seat, slowed the carriage down and he turned his head around and asked.

"Ah, it's just that..... the wind… I can't seem to contact anyone."(Isotta)

Being unable to contact the fortress or the town, Isotta was bewildered as she answered. In the mean time, the carriage seemed to have arrived at the fortress ground. Pieces of wood and materials were scattered across the grounding site, and only a large piece of cloth turned up by flapping in the wind.

".....this is weird, it's too quiet."(Shadeed)

Shaheed felt uncomfortable, as the atmosphere on the site was totally different from the time when he was last here. As it was pretty much noon, the number of workers should be scuffling around the scaffolding and the site. Fonke brought the carriage alongside the entrance of the fortress, and using his wind arts, he covered the body of the carriage with a wind wall.

"Fuee~~ good heavens, is everyone on their breaks? Though I want a cup of fruit sake."(Fonke)
"Hey, we're in a middle of a mission. Be careful with your unscrupulous behavior in front of the captain."(Aisha)

Being warned by the serious Aisha, Fonke shrugged it off with an "ahh~scary".

"Anyway we should disembark, have you heard anything about this, captain?"(Vermeer)
"Nope, for the time being..... doesn't t the atmosphere here seem weird to you?"(Yuusuke)

While Vermeer led the disembarking of the carriage, Yuusuke began inquiring Shaheed. Shaheed started to explained that during the time he was here, work was always ongoing till sundown. Since this is such a bright time and there wasn't anyone around, he warned us to be vigilant.

"Alright, then everyone lookout around your surroundings--" (Yuusuke)

-- Something is aiming at you from the back!-- (Reifold)

Yuusuke gave out a warning order, as he heard something that sounded familiar. Reflexively turning his head behind, he saw that, standing in front of the entrance of the site next to where the soils have been piled up, there was a green hair man dressed in a similar uniform of that of the god corps swinging his arms upwards.

The man's clothes began to flutter unnaturally and intensely. The dust around his feet began to dance as his hair fluttered. He swung up his arms to a familiar posture. It was the same stance when that green hair guy, whom I encountered in the gate square, released a wind blade. ~pov yuusuke

Yuusuke instantly spit out a command and opened his customization menu. Next, he created a customized earth wall right in front of his feet. Right as the wall appeared, the green hair man released his wind blade simultaneously. *Slicing sound* As he heard the sound of the earth being sliced, the top half of the wall became an inverted triangle.

"Wha- What's going on!"(Isotta)
"A Wind Blade? Where did it appear from?"
"It came from there, the entrance next to the soil hill! I'll create another wall, quick gather around me!"(Yuusuke)

In a kneeling position, he began to create another wall while increasing its divine arts resistance parameter. A light effect surrounded the earth wall. Meanwhile, after releasing the 2nd blade , the man began to flee from the field of vision of Yuusuke's party. But immediately after the wall was formed, Isotta's shriek reverberated while, at the same time, Shaheed shot a water ball.

The opponent side also had another guy who poised ready to release another wind blade. While the wind blade was diverted to counter the water ball attack released by Shaheed, Yuusuke's party immediately jumped back into cover behind the wall, as remnants of the attack left scratches on the ground.

The wind blade, which was released from the vicinity of the entrance, showed that it even had enough power to pierce through the increased divine arts resistance of the earth wall.

"This is bad! That fella is from "Wind Troupe"! Blue garden's elite unit!"(Fonke)
"Why are they here in such a place like this ..... tsu!"(Vermeer)
"Oh no.....! Well then, the people who had been working here should all be...."(Aisha)

The face of Fonke and Vermeer changed as they realized who their opponent was. Aisha's face turned blue while she covered her mouth.

"If we remain like this, we will be sniped. Let's retreat into the fortress."(Vermeer)
"Alright! For the time being I'll leave the commanding to Vermeer!"(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke created a tunnel-like wall towards the fortress, and, following Vermeer's orders, everyone retreated to safety. "That's a good decision," said Vermeer, as he admired Yuusuke's decision.

Preparing for an ambush, Shaheed led the pack while aiming at the top of the fortress with his divine arts.

The wind blades, one by one, hit the wall of the tunnel and broke it. Meanwhile Yuusuke managed to respond by repairing the walls in succession with his customization.

"Isotta, Search for the enemies"(Vermeer)
"Ye,Yes...."(Isotta)

Shaheed set himself up by the side of the door as he guarded the entrance to the fortress. Isotta began using her wind to search the compound of the fortress to ascertain whether there was anyone lurking inside.

At the same time, Yuusuke created a few layers of wall, making it like onion, and was holding up against the relentless assaults of the wind blades. It seemed that they couldn't be compared to the blades of the man whom he fought in the gate square. This is the power of the divine arts these so called "elites" of the divine arts warriors wield. Yuusuke realized that his overconfidence with his abilities have been tamed by such power.

~~ Although the wall of earth would hold up, but for the lowest category of divine arts, the wind arts, to be able to do so much damage....~~(pov Yuusuke)

"Ther, there isn't any.....presences of enemies"(Isotta)
"Alright Captain! Let's head inside the fortress!"(Vermeer)

As they rushed through the entrance without a door, Yuusuke touched the wall of the fortress to check if there was chime indicating the possibility of customization. The moment he heard the chime, he opened his customization menu and blocked all exits that seem likely for intrusion.
After all the intrusion paths were blocked, he further solidified the stones of that make up the wall into an impregnable fortress by increasing its strength and resistance against divine arts.

Gear Hawk Fortress, although it was in the middle of construction, it was splendidly enormous. Isotta's search radius begin to expand as it was a extremely narrow indoors, and the blockade made it possible to move around. she began to search the basement and top two floors for the existence of enemies.

It seems that there is a wind art jamming all contacts to the city, thus there won't be any reinforcement coming. Tomorrow, if we can hold on until tomorrow, Violet will have sensed something amiss with Yuusuke's party and will come with reinforcements. She might even send the god corps out after 14 hours.

For the time being, Yuusuke's party moved to the nearest room to barricade themselves and begin planning on the counter measures.

"This has become a terrible first mission....."(Yuusuke)

14. Gearhawk Fortress

"How is that?"(Wind troupe guy A)
"It's useless after all. In the end I barely managed to scratch it."(Wind troupe guy B)

Hearing that the wind user, who had the most penetrating arts, gave up, the leader of the elite group of Blue Garden sighed, groaning without saying anything as he hit the outer wall of the fortress that stood before him.

The appearance of the strange structure around the fortress was not in their calculations. Still, this structure has achieved “the intended result”.

“We cannot call this situation resolved, can we?”(Wind troupe guy C)
“We are not done yet. We have to remove all traces of ourselves first.”(Wind troupe guy A)

Jamming the transmissions by using wind arts did not take much time to set up. However, the walls of the fortress were immune to the slicing and stabbing damage of the wind attacks. Although, the walls of the fortress were not that durable during the attack they carried out a few days ago.

“It was the job of that black haired guy after all.”(Wind troupe guy B)
“I’m afraid you are right. I heard that his divine arts are quite unusual…”(Wind troupe guy A)
“It was an oversight of the intelligence guys. Shall we file a complaint?”(Wind troupe guy C)
“It’s futile. Without doubt, the water troupe guys will back them up.”(Wind troupe guy A)

The problematic upper echelons of Blue Garden were the few water arts users residing in the fortress city, Paula. With their ability to heal people and purify the water, they were highly regarded in the social structure of the city. The symbolic head of the Blue Garden was also a water arts user. All of this provided water arts users with a lot of influence in this country.

Divine arts militia organizations, that existed within Blue Garden at that time, were equivalent to the god corps of the Fonclank kingdom. The wind arts intelligence unit has recently achieved great fame after successfully luring Zeshald over to their side. Having obtained a capable leader and instructor, the water arts users were favorable towards these spies.

The Wind troupe, whose main forte was assassinations and guerilla tactics, did not leave traces of their action in the enemy country. Their actions were focused on bringing serious damage over a long period of time, yet these actions were perceived as harassment and provocation.

However, their opponent did not react rashly. There were no actions, leading to their destruction. There were no signs of riots or coup-d’état. This lead to the voices of doubt, regarding the efficiency of the actions of the wind troupe, being raised in their own country.
This time the calls were not only to lower the budget of the group, but also to change their strategic approach and to cause more direct damage from now on.

Thus, if the attack on the fortress could be “doubtlessly” linked to the wind troupe, Blue Garden’s government would become unable to brush off protests against the offensive action within Fonclank territory, as it did now, saying, “Without evidence, that is nothing but baseless rumors”.

If the truth came to light, other countries would protest against it, if they continued their agenda as they did now. Because of this, they could not afford to leave any evidence behind.
“Well, we should leave the matters to the group inside, for now.”(Wind troupe guy A)[i]
“I wonder how successful will they be…?”(Wind troupe guy B)

Answering this to his colleague, who seemed to be optimistically thinking ahead, the leader of the wind troupe answered like that while admiring the blockade (wall that was blocking off) of the Gearhawk fortress.

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On the first floor of the Gearhawk fortress, six people, hiding in one of the rooms on the right side passage, were discussing about how to escape their current situation. For these guys, a fight against the elite of the Blue Garden was reckless. Therefore, they had to hold out against the siege of the fortress until reinforcements arrived. But to do that, they first had to secure rations and drinkable water.

“We can’t do anything about the provisions we have left at our carriage. It seems the only possibility is to search for the food storage of the fortress. “(Vermeer)
“The food storage room and the well should be located in the basement. I think there are stairs leading to it in the kitchen.”(Shaheed)
“Alright then, let’s check the basement together.”(Yuusuke)

Listening to Vermeer’s and Shaheed’s conversation, Yuusuke decided to secure the provisions. Under the current circumstances, Yuusuke also decided to block off all other passages in preparation for the siege.

“I think it is better to gather resources such as medical supplies, lamp oil, and wood. Securing the everyday goods will also help in maintaining morale.”(Aisha)
“Agreed. I can’t go on without any alcohol under these circumstances!”(Fonke)

Going along with Aisha’s proposal, the group agreed that, alongside food, they should also gather other daily necessities and goods, which would be necessary in case of a prolonged siege. Having decided on their goal, the group agreed to split up to search the first and second floors. Just in case, they warned Fonke to share the alcohol should he find some and not keep it all for himself.

“U-uhm… The 2nd floor and the basement has not yet been scanned for enemies, therefore…”(Isotta)
“Alright, please search for them.”(Yuusuke)

Hesitantly bringing up the dangers of their search, Isotta promptly performed her job.

“To deal with everything like this, you sure act like someone selected by the palace.”(Vermeer)

To Vermeer, gifted with an acute sense of danger, actions like transferring of command to subordinates was something he was not accustomed to. In light of this, he valued Yuusuke’s quick wits very highly. Yuusuke replied with a smile, saying, “It just happened by chance,” while thinking about the voice that warned him on the oncoming attack.

[“That voice, it had to be that sly Reifold…”](Yuusuke)

Yuusuke could not comprehend why that man, who was supposed to be a Blue Garden spy, let him know about the danger. The time that Sun was apprehended, and the time when he was troubled by the order to join the military service, that man just appeared out of nowhere, gave Yuusuke some valuable advice, and disappeared immediately afterwards.

[“What is his aim?”](Yuusuke)

Yuusuke’s doubts increased even more as he thought of it, deep in his mind.

“I wonder what happened to the people who were in the fortress…?”(Aisha)
“I don’t know. Did you sense any human presence, Isotta?”(Fonke)
“Y-Yes, but the air is unusually fresh. It was probably ventilated.”(Isotta)

Hearing Isotta’s reply, Fonke clicked his tongue and scratched his head, while Aisha cast her eyes down, scowling. Unable to comprehend the meaning behind Isotta’s words, Yuusuke asked for an explanation.

“What does that mean?”(Yuusuke)
“Uhm…”(Isotta)

According to the explanation, human presence always remained in places that were previously inhabited. It was especially true for an indoor environment, where traces could be found even after dozens of days have passed since the place became uninhabited.

By the state of this air, especially in an indoor space, where the air was stale, one could tell how long has it been since humans have left this place. Therefore it was very strange that there was no such human presence in this fortress. The only conclusion was that the air was forcefully changed.

“With that said… the air in this fortress was probably cleaned using wind arts…”(Isotta)
“In short, these guys have entered the fortress before, and cleaned out the stench of blood after finishing up their job.”(Fonke)

Fonke has frankly stated the conclusions, which meant that the people, who were in the fortress, were already dead.

“As we have talked on the road, around ten days ago there was a material delivery and duty rotation to this fortress. I think that at least by then none of this have had happened yet.” (Shaheed)
“Regular communications were probably faked by those guys.”(Yuusuke)

Assuming they were planning to escape from the fortress by themselves, thinking about the clean air, which the fortress was filled with, this situations was by no means one where they could call this air “fragrant”.

However, after Yuusuke has blocked off all the invasion routes into the fortress, for some time the group could hear the sounds from the attacks that the wall at the front entrance has been suffering. As the wall stood strong and the attacks had ceased, Shaheed noted that the cage they have built out of the fortress was beyond the expectations of their attackers.

“Probably captain’s divine arts are too much even for those guys to deal with.”(Shaheed)
“Is that so… However it was barely enough.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke’s body shuddered as he remembered the power of the wind troupe’s wind blades. Just being grazed by one of them in the shoulder would lead to a serious injury.

“I am confident that direct hit from one of them would mean the end to the victim.”(Yuusuke)

Despite talking about all these things everyone decided that they should first secure their food and water. Having decided that, the group set out to look for a kitchen. Isotta was responsible for scouting for enemies and the mobility of the group and Fonke was satisfied with being in the middle of the group. As Shaheed

was skilled in diverting enemy attacks during critical moments of the fight, he and Vermeer were in the vanguard, while Yuusuke formed the rear guard along with Aisha.

“Weren’t your fire arts not fit for combat, Vermeer?”(Yuusuke)
“I can create enough fire to use for a light, but it lacks the power to be used as a weapon.”(Vermeer)

Because of this, Vermeer was appointed to be the light bearer and Shaheed was the only person in the group with any real offensive power. Yuusuke had opened the customization menu, so that he would be prepared to use the pavement of the floor to create protective walls and defend everyone in the group.

The dining room near the kitchen was destroyed, with tables and chairs thrown around in chaos, and the dried remains of the food scattered all over the floor. There were signs of the stone being scraped off by the wind blades in the passage, but the state of the room was especially bad.

“It seems they carried out their attack during the meal. A lot of people have died here.”

Vermeer pointed towards the mass of broken tables and chairs in the room. The floor, the walls, and even the ceiling, were abundant with marks left by wind blades, accompanied by a lot of bloodstains. A strange smell they had not felt before, floated in the room. It was a mixture of rotting food and the stench of blood.

“They should have thrown the corpses into the basement.”

As Fonke said that, Isotta, who was standing near the entrance, suddenly jerked her shoulders. A construction of such a fortress required an equally large number of personnel. If it was outside, they could have hidden the bodies by burying them. Thinking about the fact that they have yet had to find a body in this fortress – the very thought seemed to be impossible.

„Is everything alright, Isotta?”(Yuusuke)
“Y-yes…. I – I am alright.”(Isotta)

Looking at Isotta, who gave her reply in a tensed voice, while continuing to tense her body, Yuusuke thought to himself:

[“Why would such an ordinary child become a member of the god corps?”]

Yet again, he had no time to think about it as long as his attention had to be concentrated on the investigation of the basement.

“… The cover is tightly shut. We also need a key.”(Vermeer)
“I’ll open it right now. Let me through.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke opened the tightly locked trap hole into the basement within three seconds. Unlocking it through customization was way faster than using the earth arts.

“Wow, that sure is one useful divine art! Aren’t you invincible in close combat?”(Vermeer)

Vermeer admired Yuusuke as Fonke pulled the handle of the trapdoor, halfway opening it. As they put the light into the gap, they saw a stairway, descending into the darkness. Shadows of doubt appeared on Fonke’s face as he was lifting the trapdoor by the shape resembling a handle.

"……"(Fonke)
"What happened, Fonke?"(Aisha)
"…Nothing, it's just that something is bothering me."(Fonke)

After saying that, Fonke scratched his upper lip as he glanced at Isotta. The girl was standing still, staring at the crack as she was scanning the basement for potential enemies. Noticing that Aisha looked at Isotta with a worried expression.

What's happened? … Did you hear something?"(Aisha)
"Isotta?"(Fonke)
"I-I'm all right… But, I think I sense the enemy. There's three of them… I feel the aura of the wind arts users. And… I think I also feel a presence of a prisoner…"(Isotta)

There appeared to be three wind arts users, likely the members of the wind troupe, as well as two prisoners. She finished the report by saying that she did not detect any enemy in between the door and the storehouse.

As Yuusuke did not know to what the extent the wind arts could provide the user with the information about the enemy, he judged the severity of the situation from Isotta's pale face and shaking shoulders. Yuusuke speculated that either the wind users had very strong wind arts at their disposal or the prisoners were in a very bad situation.

"Have they noticed us?"(Yuusuke)
"No- No they haven't noticed us yet… Uhm… half of them… are sleeping."(Isotta)
"Thinking that they have locked themselves in, these guys took a chance to sleep in the beds. Or maybe this is all a trap?"(Yuusuke)
"Captain, did you notice any kind of trap attached to the door? For example, something connected to the locking mechanism?"(Vermeer)

To answer Vermeer's question, Yuusuke opened his customization menu and checked the customization history. He examined the lock part. As he used [Rotate] and [Enlarge][ii] functions, which were part of his ability, he noticed a sphere like contraption that would break if he unlocked the door normally and turned the handle.

As the ball was made of metal, it was sure to make a loud noise as it fell down the stairs.

"I see… So there was a device installed after all."(Vermeer)

Vermeer and the rest of the company were either shocked or amazed at the way that Yuusuke's divine art unlocked the door, bypassing the locking mechanism.

["We are at the advantage from here on"]

Feeling that they have the advantage, the group started discussing on how to deal with the enemies in the underground. As half of them were sleeping, now was a good chance for an attack.

"Our attack will be most effective this way."
"We can decide the battle if we attack all at once."
"If I attacked from close range, I think even my water ball could kill a person."(Shaheed)

As they had no chances of winning in a divine arts battle, thinking that his squad would manage to clutch a win in close combat, Yuusuke strengthened the daggers they carried for self-protection. Using his customization, he bestowed various enchantments on these daggers which were already strengthened through the use of the earth arts.

In the Item Customize Create System, which was the basis for Yuusuke's Customize Create ability, when customizing clothes, map items, or items such as food, the user was allowed a certain degree of freedom. Still, originally this system was meant to customize the weapons and the defensive items of the user.

Therefore, when customizing the armor class items, Yuusuke had an extensive amount of options. This meant, that even if it could be considered cheating, Yuusuke could raise the strength and power of these items as much as he wanted.

Offensive power, stamina, divine arts power, accuracy, body strength, agility – Yuusuke could add special effects like that to the item that was customized. Thus, Yuusuke enchanted those daggers to their customization limit. Having finished with the weapons, Yuusuke went on to enhance the accessories with various body ability raising perks. After a while he came to realize something.

["I didn't expect this myself…"]
He murmured his innermost thoughts as he was handing out the daggers, with their offensive abilities customized, to three members of his squad.

"?! Whoa, this baby is amazing!"(Fonke)
"It's mysterious, I felt my strength surging just by touching the dagger. My body also feels lighter."(Shaheed)

"I can understand weapon and ability enhancement through the divine arts, but I have never heard of the weapon itself giving these effects to their user. What kind of a divine art do you really have?"(Vermeer)
"It's a divine art of the Evil god."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke jokingly answered Vermeer's question, as he decided to keep the truth behind his ability hidden. Vermeer smiled broadly and left this matter aside, without further questioning Yuusuke's ability.

"Captain, this is your first mission, right? Do you have any experience in combat?"(Vermeer)
"None. I had a brawl in the game plaza before, but this is my first time facing a real battle."(Yuusuke)

Vermeer nodded, acknowledging Yuusuke's reply, and began disseminating the strategy. According to it, Yuusuke and the two girls would stay behind at the entrance, while the three guys went in to attack. After he gave a sign, he wanted the three of them to go in and support the vanguard. Yuusuke, being a complete novice at these kind of things, agreed to it, leaving all the decisions up to the more experienced Vermeer and the rest of his group.

After turning the light off, and silently, fully opening the basement hatch, Fonke enveloped himself, Vermeer, and Shaheed with a mobility wind aura. Afterwards, the three of them silently disappeared into the darkness of the stairway. During the execution of their battle plan, Isotta was continuously monitoring the status of the enemy in the basement.

In the meantime, Yuusuke was customizing his cloak, leaving customization of the clothes, other party members wore, for when they returned.

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“Uh-uhm, I’m done.“(Isotta)

Isotta’s face twitched as she asked Yuusuke for further orders. There were no echoes of battle nor were there any cries of death. It was as if the wind troupe, who were hidden in the basement, met their deaths silently. But, as they received the signal from Vermeer’s group, they descended to the basement.

“…mhm?”(Yuusuke)

As they were descending down the stairs, Yuusuke frowned at the strange smell that has assaulted them. This smell was different from the smell of blood that was mixed in the air at the dining room above. This corridor was filled with an awful smell, which was frequent in wet, damp places.

After climbing down into the basement, Yuusuke’s group joined up with the Vermeer’s group. Leaving the stairwell, the path became a bit wider as corridor expanded to both sides. At the right hand side, four doors were positioned at the sides of the corridor, and three barrels were stacked up at the end of the passage. On the left hand side corridor widened immediately, and a construction, which was probably a water well, could be seen.

“Don’t you think it ended too quickly?”
“It feels wrong. Honestly it was dangerous. If we didn’t have these daggers, we would have suffered damage as well.”
“It’s to the right”, continued Vermeer.

Aisha nodded to the fire arts user and entered the designated storage room. A question mark popped over Yuusuke’s head, as he was unable to understand what was happening between them.

“I asked her to heal the prisoners that we freed”, explained Vermeer.

Before long, sobs and cries of a woman could be heard from the storage room.

“Were their injuries that heavy…?”(Yuusuke)
“Their injuries are not serious, but this is not the worst problem right now.”(Vermeer)

Vermeer did not go into the details, as he answered Yuusuke’s question. Isotta appeared from behind the corner, with her eyes cast down. She entered the room, carrying the water from the well that Aisha asked her to bring for the treatment of the prisoners. Fonke scratched his head, thinking about the future.

The atmosphere within the group was heavy, similarly to the stench that filled the air around them. Shaheed, who has been the only one to remain silent, started to speak.

“Captain still looks young and weak, but judging from the fight at the plaza and the accusations of that scoundrel, I think that he is mature enough for this.”
“Eh? What is happening? Despite everything, I am an adult.”(Yuusuke)
“Oh, is that really true? Well, it might have been strange of me to be considerate about that.”
“Well, I guess it’s my bad. You seemed to be too honest, Captain. I feared it might give you a trauma.”

Without any eagerness, the three directed Yuusuke to the room before him. The emergency food supplies were untouched, but moved to a certain part of the room. The freed up space was respectively separated into a space for the wind art users of the wind troupe and a space for the corpses of their prisoners.

“Three prisoners were held here. Two of them are being healed by Aisha further inside.”
“And the last one…?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke glanced at a pile on the floor that was covered with a cloth. It was not hard for him to guess that a corpse of the third prisoner was lying under it. Fonke stretched his hand towards the cloth and looked at Yuusuke as if confirming that he should uncover it.

“Well, this is not a thing I should be intentionally showing…”

For the elite soldiers that primarily stayed around the palace and usually avoided the dirty work, knights of god corps knew little of the actual work out in the field. The prisoner’s corpse that Vermeer’s group found and shown to the captain of a god corps of the palace, most likely belonged to a female god corps member, a captain in fact, who was captured during the defense of the fortress.

“Uh…”(Yuusuke)

At first sight, it looked like the body was clothed in red colored spotted pattern camouflage clothes – the body was covered in deep red bruises and skin tears. Although the body was lying in a usual posture, her hands and legs were bent in an unnatural places. There were no fingernails on the remaining fingers of the hand and feet of the corpse.

The woman parts of the body were both sliced off, the nose was broken, and the jaw had an unusual shape. Her disheveled blue hair was tangled into a tight clot and had some bleached yellow powder stuck to them.

“…How cruel.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke did not avert his eyes until the body was covered again. This made an expression of admiration float up on Vermeer’s face. Such gruesome sight was quite rare during the times of peace, but when fighting has started, such scenes were not a strange sight on the field.

“…”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke suddenly thought of something and touched part of the corpse that was jutting out from under the cloth.

Ding Dong

“?! It can’t be…”(Yuusuke)
“Captain…?”

Without answering the doubting calls of his group, Yuusuke opened the customization menu, feeling that he shouldn’t be doing this. In the menu he saw the image of the mangled body, but, by manipulation the various parameters, he could heal the skin tears and bruises, and even fix the broken bones.

Although most of the work included adjusting the damage sliders of various parts to their zero values, since his task concerned tampering with a human body, it still took a considerable amount of time. Finally, in the screen of the customization window, a reasonably muscular, naked body of a blue haired young woman could be seen.

Yuusuke, surrounded by an aura peculiar to the activation of the divine art, moved his finger in the air as if performing some sort of special ceremony, and was stared at by Vermeer’s company, who were

bewildered, unable to understand the meaning of their captain's actions. Isotta, having come to relay the information from the other two prisoners, whom were now healed and calmed down by Aisha, was also watching this spectacle from the doorway.

"All right. Execute!"(Yuusuke)

Light effects surrounded the body and burst out from under the clothes the body was covered with. Before long, the light particles, dancing in the air, settled, and the dark red mangled hand that was missing some fingers has changed into smooth white hand of a female. The fingers that were gruesomely cut were also attached back to their former positions.

"What?! What the fuck did you do?!"(Vermeer)

Vermeer and Shaheed, their eyes opened wide from amazement, were at loss for words. Before they regained their composure, Fonke has uncovered the body again. A beautiful, perfectly symmetrical body was lying there with not a single wound visible on her beautiful skin. Isotta, covered her mouth, her face becoming all red from embarrassment.

"Haaaa… I guess reviving someone is impossible after all…"(Yuusuke)

He could only customize the corpse as any other item.

"That… that startled me… Besides, if you could revive people, I couldn't think of you as a human anymore, captain."(Vermeer)
"I agree…"(Shaheed)
"Haaa… She was quite a beauty. Those wind troupe bastards are thinking too highly of themselves"(Yuusuke)

Cooling their emotions, Vermeer and Shaheed also squat down near the body sighing in a similar manner to Yuusuke. Contrary to the two, instead of focusing on the mysterious arts they had just witnessed, Fonke, obviously more interested in the beauty of the woman, covered the cloth again with regret clearly shown by his actions.

Afterwards, listening to Isotta's report, everyone moved towards the inner room to listen to what the two surviving prisoners had to say.

"U-Uhm… Captain"
"Hmm?"(Yuusuke)
"I, I think that… To be able to become beautiful again… that person… would also feel relieved…"
"… Is that so?"(Yuusuke)

["Yeah I guess she would be relieved"], thought Yuusuke, praying for the woman to be able to feel at least a little bit more happiness in the next world.
Isotta looked up at her ["Captain Yuusuke"], admiring him with her green eyes.

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[i] NOTE: the furigana implied "inside" while kanji read "concealed group"
[ii] CSI style

15. Rain From the Empty Sky

In the storage room, two females – one with blond hair and another with blue hair – were sitting cuddled together and covered with a cloth used to cover the raw ingredients. They looked terrible, their eyes swollen from crying and signs of bruises still present on their faces. Aisha, having read Yuusuke's thoughts from his face, spoke in regret of her inability to be of more help.

"This is the most I can do with my powers."(Aisha)

Aisha, having done her best to close small cuts and scratches, hung her head dejectedly. While Yuusuke thought to help heal the girls completely, that was not his biggest problem at the moment.

"How do I say this… why are they covered with this cloth?"(Yuusuke)
"We didn't have any spare clothes…"(Aisha)

Aisha pointed towards a pile of rags at the corner of the warehouse as she explained that the clothes the girls were originally wearing were too tattered to be of any use. Their clothes, that were originally uniforms of a maid and a fortress staff, were shredded to pieces, stained by a large quantity of blood and other bodily fluids, and have been turned into a dirty pile of rags.

Yuusuke, pitying the two girls who were glancing at him with anxious looks in their eyes, decided that he should start by procuring some better clothing to wear instead of that cloth, used to cover the raw ingredients, which the girls were currently covered with. Thus, he approached the pile of rags and executed his customization art. Cleaning -> Mending -> Finishing.

"Ehm… C-Captain… What are you doing?"(Aisha)
"I don't think he could surprise us even more."(Fonke)

"Here," said Yuusuke as he gave brand new looking uniforms to Aisha, whose eyes were wide from astonishment, so she could give them to the girls. As some of the material was destroyed, the length of the skirts was a tad bit shorter, but it was still way better than being covered with a cloth used for raw ingredients. Fonke and the rest, having seen everything already, just shrugged their shoulders.

As the girls were changing clothes, the men had to stay outside. Sitting on the cold floor of the storehouse was a pathetic option, so Yuusuke created them some makeshift chairs.

"Captain, you can really do anything, eh?" (Fonke)
"It's, how to say it, convenient."(Shaheed)
"I heard the rumors that you are able to use every kind of divine art… It seems that they might actually be true ."(Vermeer)

After the girls finished changing, they once again began asking the girls about the events that had happened in the fortress. It started three days after the personnel change and the delivery of materials, when the work for the day was already done and it was the time of the day when the workers had gathered in the dining room to eat their supper. A call for help suddenly resounded from outside of the fortress.

["A GUARD HAS FALLEN!!! WE NEED A HEALER. SOMEONE, PLEASE HELP!!!"](Wind Troupe crossdresser A)

The man seemed to have come down from the rooftop passage. Using the commotion outside as a sign to attack, countless wind blades flew into the dining room.

The busy dining room instantly turned into hell, filled with agonizing cries. Walls and ceiling were immediately splattered with fresh blood and on the floor, was food mixed with huge amount of blood and entrails of the deceased.

The off duty guards, who were on the second floor, became aware of all the ruckus that happened on the first floor. Some of the guards outside had their attention turned towards the same ruckus, but were quickly killed by wind blades once inside. As people tried to help the fallen guards, they too were slaughtered like a herd of animals.

Blue Garden elites, who have infiltrated the fortress by hiding between the arriving staff, took the fortress's maids and staff as hostages and even used them as living shields. They also pretended to be their allies as they approached the fortress guards and then quickly killed them.

As the chaos reached its climax, the only ones moving inside and outside of the fortress were the members of the wind troupe in disguise.

Amongst the survivors, the soldiers did not have the will to fight anymore and the staff were made to carry the bodies of their comrades and bury them in a hole outside of the fortress. Corpses inside of the fortress were carried to the sewage facility on the opposite side of the fortress. After all the corpses were piled at the sewage facility, the captives were also killed.

The guard inside the storage room was tortured, trying to get her to spit out the information about the secret rooms or passages where other survivors might still be hiding in. On the third day of this search, a notice about the Darkness God corps had arrived.

Wind Troupe also seized the information that this corps was comprised of only a single person. Moreover, that person was the wielder of a special type of divine arts. As they guessed that he was coming here to hasten the construction of the fortress though the use of his divine arts, they planned to fetch themselves a huge achievement for ambushing and destroying the newly formed elite unit of the palace.

The two girls, from the day of the attack until the day Yuusuke and his party arrived, were made to listen to the screams of the female guard that resounded throughout the cellar. The girls kept their sanity by persuading themselves that help will definitely arrive from the palace soon.

After listening to the summary of the events, everyone in Yuusuke's group sighed heavily. In the end, the only survivors in the fortress were these two women. This meant that around 80 guards, staff, and maids had been killed. To tear through the heavy silence, Vermeer proposed a plan for their subsequent actions.

"First we should confirm our fighting capabilities." (Vermeer)

Guessing the enemy strength, they assumed that the events that happened in several places simultaneously within Fonklanc's territory were caused by the Blue Garden spies. In that case, all of these events can be linked to the wind troupe which would amount their numbers to approximately 3 squads, who were acting separately.

Usually one squad consisted of four to eight soldiers. If this was the case, then the attack of the fortress would have been a collaborated attack between several squads.

Currently they have confirmed that there were at least four people outside. Then there were the three invaders that the darkness corps killed in the food storeroom. According to the testimony of the surviving girls, the attackers numbered around ten. If the groups acted in three to four man squads, then there was a possibility of another group hiding inside the fortress. While they were discussing this matter, at that time …..

Katsuntsun katsun katsu katsu katsu katkatkatsu….. [Sounds of lock being picked]

“?!”(Darkness corps)
“What now…?”(Someone from the darkness corps)
[Ding!](Sound of a metal ball dropping on the floor)
Yuusuke had returned the device that was attached to the lock of the trapdoor at the top of the staircase, leading down to the storage room, to its original state. The sound that resounded just now was the sound of the metal ball dropping down the staircase. This meant that someone else had opened the trapdoor.

“The-There are two of them… They are getting closer… probably there is one more at the top of the stairs… ?!They have also noticed us!”(Isotta)

Isotta immediately started searching for enemies and reported the situation in a whispering voice. The captive girls started clinging to Aisha’s arm in panic. As they did not hear any footsteps, the only way to confirm the approach of the other party was through the use of wind arts.

“What do we do now, captain?”(Vermeer)

As Yuusuke thought about their options after being asked for further instructions, he suddenly remembered what Reifold had told him back at the forest. He was also a wind user of great skills and was able to appear in different places according to his whim. Yet, the same Reifold was unable to detect Yuusuke’s pitfalls.

“Say, in a divine arts combat, can you invoke divine arts without performing specific actions?”(Yuusuke)
“Like raising your arms or performing a pushing motion? Well, once you get adept at using divine arts you can usually perform them by merely concentrating your mind.”(Vermeer)

Vermeer answered, that for the elites it would pose no problems aside from a small loss of concentration. Shaheed added, that he could cast a water ball like that if he was standing still. Therefore, capturing or restricting an elite divine arts user would have no effect on lowering his battle potential.

“So, capture or restriction is out of the question…”(Yuusuke)
“Our opponents are the elites that are used to working behind enemy lines. It would be for the best to avoid thinking about being nice to them.”(Vermeer)
“It is likely that, aside of the acting squad inside, there is another squad responsible for guarding the fortress.”(Shaheed?)
“Running away from them is completely out of the question……Although they would expect us to run from them.”(Fonke)

Yuusuke had pondered about shackles that diminishes ones divine arts strength. However, it did not seem likely that they would be able to obtain any information from the elite spy group, even if Yuusuke went through all the trouble of capturing them, they would probably kill themselves. If they fought against them

and let even one of them escape, he or she would alert his or her comrades. Amongst his hesitations, Yuusuke finally decided to put the lives of his subordinates above anything and exterminate the opponents.

Having decided that, Yuusuke immediately closed and reinforced the storeroom doors followed by the constructing of traps in the cellar's passage.

He created pitfalls at the entrance to their room, as well as at the bottom of the entrance stairs. At the same time he created a device, resembling a suspended ceiling, right above those pitfalls. This device would remove the pillars supporting the ceiling. Originally, he took into consideration the preservation of the cellar, so Yuusuke only created exceptionally deep pitfalls, but he then added the falling ceiling as a sure kill measure to finish his opponents off.

Two wind users carefully advanced through the underground passage. After arriving at the closed door, they decided to siege their opponents and stopped to erase their presence. As a means of mentally overpowering their enemy, the two silently approached the closed door.

As they were in the second floor of the fortress when it got closed off, they got locked in with no means of getting out. After receiving instructions from the party outside of the fortress, they began searching for Yuusuke's group.

"Heeeey, it's useless to hide!"(Wind Troupe guy A)
"There are still a lot of us inside the fortress. Give up and undo your blockade."(Wind Troupe guy B)

Not getting any reply, the two exchanged glances as they began scanning the situation in the room. Suddenly the floor near the door disappeared and Yuusuke, having confirmed that the two fell into the trap, erased the supporting pillar. Death cries and a hideous sound of meat being crushed resounded in the basement.

"?! What's wrong?! What happened?! Answer me you two!"(Wind Troupe Girl)

Screamed the remaining member of the group, who was waiting upstairs. Thinking, ["It's a woman"] Yuusuke wavered for a second, but the stern looks of his comrades have dispelled his doubts away and he customized the stairs, removing the steps.

Having suddenly lost her footing, the woman slid down the ramp into a pitfall that was readied for her at the bottom. Afterwards ceiling stones started to fall on her and, before long, her shrieks subsided as she was crushed by the stones.

"…It's all right. It seems… that was the last of them"(Isotta)

After hearing this Yuusuke restored the floor and the ceiling to their initial states and buried the three victims in the ground below the fortress. He did not clearly understand if he was bothered by his actions, but the fact that he just took the lives of three people made him feel something heavy in his chest.

After restoring the corridor he got Aisha and Shaheed to watch the entrance to the basement while Isotta and Fonke, with Vermeer as their leader, searched the second floor for enemies. It seemed that these were the last wind troupe members that have been inside of the fortress. The blockaded roof passage seemed to have traces of being hit by the wind blades as this group attempted to break out of the fortress.

[That reminds me. if the enemy would have thought of that, they could have used the wind blades to search for their opponents.”](Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke was pondering for a new potential way to use his customization ability, they went to explore the sewage facility that the two prisoners have mentioned before. The party descended to the large hall that they have found themselves in as they initially rushed into the fortress and then they took the left side’s passage. On this part of the fortress staff rooms and shower rooms lined up along the wall. After opening the door to the sewage room, everyone in the group spontaneously covered their faces with their clothes.

“What the fuck is this?”(Yuusuke)
“It’s the smell of death. Isotta, you should better wait outside.” (Vermeer)

As they only wanted to confirm the corpses, Yuusuke, along with Vermeer and Fonke descended down the stairs after leaving Isotta to guard the door. Yuusuke instantly created masks for the three of them to wear. Still, the source of this smell left them breathless.

The base of the stairs were blackened by the dried blood. As Vermeer was afraid that fire would cause the volatile gas, created by the corpses when they were decomposing, to explode, their only source of light was a dim glow that Vermeer produced without conjuring the actual flame. Therefore they could say that they were lucky that their field of vision was really small.

“Woo, how terrible… Isn’t this place really big?”(Fonke)

They saw a huge pile of discolored bodies that have lost their shape due to the attacks of the highly skilled wind users. The bodies were in such a state that, if they had not worn clothes, one would not even think of them as human bodies. The corpses were piled atop of one another and were probably the corpses of the captives, who brought all the other dead bodies here in the story, told by the two survivors.

Having confirmed the victims, the trio left this place as fast as they could. They ran up the stairs without even offering them a prayer for a better afterlife and closed the door immediately after leaving the passage. Fonke hastily used his wind arts to blow the putrid stench away.

“You were splendid down there, captain.”(Fonke)
“Was I?”(Yuusuke)
“For Starters, you did not vomit at that sight.”(Fonke)

Answered Fonke, while frowning and rubbing his stomach. “Aah”, replied Yuusuke. Witnessing that sight, it would not be strange that even a hardened person to vomit.

For Yuusuke it was at the very least a numbing sight. He certainly felt something in his stomach welling up as well. Even though it did not actually happen, in the back of his mind he felt that some of that sight had stuck to him. (as in stuck in his mind)

“What shall we do about the four guys outside?)”(Vermeer)

“We will exterminate the wind troupe”, declared Yuusuke. Fonke and Vermeer looked at each other after hearing this declaration, while Isotta blinked in surprise.

After returning to the underground cellar in the kitchen, Yuusuke moved all the provisions to the water well room and then reinforced the walls around the now empty room. He continued strengthening these walls until the room started to look like a nuclear shelter. It seemed that this storage room would continue to stand even if it would be hit directly.

After gathering everyone to this super safe room, Yuusuke opened his customization menu once more.

“Isotta.”(Yuusuke)
“Y-yes.”(Isotta)
“Can you get the horses that we used to pull our carriage to run away from here?”(Yuusuke)
“Y-yes?”(Isotta)

Yuusuke connected the underground room to the surface through a long, slender, chimney-like tube while Isotta issued a command to horses, who pulled the carriage that they rode here, to get away from here just in case they were still staying around the fortress. This was done so that would remain safe from whatever was about to happen aboveground.

“…I transmitted it, but… I don’t know if it has reached them or not…”(Isotta)
“It’s alright. But it would be sad if they got involved in this…”(Yuusuke)

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The leader of the wind troupe group, hiding outside the fortress, was discussing the wind arts transmission, which seemingly came from inside of the fortress with several of his subordinates. The message seemed to be coded as it contained only a single word [RUN]. The horses, fastened to the wagon that the group has arrived in, had run off somewhere after hearing this message.

“Maybe … they sent the empty wagon back to the city as a message that they need reinforcements?”(Wind Troupe outside guy A)
“Empty wagon as a message that they need reinforcements? Hmm…”(Wind Troupe outside group leader)
“Even if they succeed in passing the message, by the time the reinforcements arrive they will probably be killed by the inside groups.”(Wind Troupe outside guy B)

As the leader of the outside group was thinking about whether to forfeit the mission and evacuate or create some plan to lure that group out of the fortress, he suddenly looked towards the fortress as he felt an activation aura of the divine arts.

“Le-leader, over there!” (Wind Troupe outside guy A)
“What is… what the fuck…”(Wind Troupe outside group leader)

The entire fortress was enveloped in light. They saw this phenomenon before, when the darkness god corps escaped their ambush by running into the fortress. After that light has subsided before the walls of the fortress had become impregnable. This light shot skywards from around the middle part of the fortress and, after reaching a certain height, spread out like a cloud.

As the light had filled the sky, it suddenly became dark again, with only shining particles fluttering in the air. Afterwards a sound of something breaking echoed behind him and whistling sounds of wind blades started resounding all around him as something tore the sky apart.

The cloud of light in the sky had become a lump of darkness that was falling on him. Other members of the wind troupe looked at it dumbfounded, murmuring: “It can’t be….” These words were the last thing they ever said.

The upper part of the fortress had become a cloud of square-shaped stones, which numbered around fifty two thousands. Ground was shaking from this deadly rain as eighty centimeter by forty centimeter wide stones fell everywhere around the entire premises of the fortress in approximately a one hundred meter radius.

After a while silence fell on the premises of the destroyed fortress and the single sound that tore through the silence was the sound on the horses that were returning after being called back again.

16. Under the Sun and the Starry Sky

~Pov of I don't know who maybe violet? maybe krielov? maybe god? maybe Morgan freeman!

After receiving an emergency contact from Gear Hawk Fortress, an emergency party consisting of several god corps units was dispatched. By the time we arrived at the fort, the night was about to end. In the morning mist, the scene in which we saw was as if it was a ruin, the interior of Gear Hawk Fortress was being exposed, wreckage could be found all around, graves markers stood planted throughout the whole site. And in the vicinity was one of the god corps carriage's horse which was wandering around aimlessly.

Seeing that the friendly reinforcement have arrived, Yuusuke and his party who survived the onslaught began to walk out of the fortress unharmed. They began to describe the series of events that happened and handed the 2 survivors to the water arts professional unit. Before we started cleaning up the wreckage, they led us to underground basement of the fortress where the remains were located.

Debris of cobblestone was scattered all over the site. When Yuusuke used his customization ability, the debris was considered as part of a group item, thus allowing him to stack them up nicely in the corner of the site. Multiple craters were left behind in the premises, and an object that seemly belonged to the Wind Troupe was found within one of them.

The three people who were crushed inside the fortress were being dug up as well, with their bodies also restored by using the customization ability. As one would expect, the bodies weren’t in a very well off state, but they could be sufficiently restored to their former condition. And they will be sent back to Blue Garden on a later date.

10 dead bodies of the Wind Troupe were discovered by Yuusuke's party, but as they continued to search the vicinity behind the fort another 5 bodies was found, tallying up to a total of 15 bodies.

Similar to how Floncanc's palace god corps function, the Blue Garden elite troops normally do missions in a platoon of 20 people. But in reality, the whole wind troupe have been wiped out.

The bodies that had been stacked up in the basement were too difficult for them to move, thus they were being subjected to cremation. A part of the Gear Hawk Fortress was made into a memorial to mourn these victims.

Thus, the fortress was being extended a little bit. A state funeral for the victims will be carried out onsite, transportation carriages are being dispatch from the palace to the bereaved families and relatives to mourn for their love one.

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4 days after the incident ~~

<< The Armed Group from Blue Garden which attacked Gear Hawk Fortress was wiped out by the Darkness God Corps with an Iron Fist >>

It seems that this topic became the headlines of Sanc Adiet, as a promulgation that was distributed by the palace. << The chief constructor of the observation tower wiped out the entire Blue Garden elite force just by himself! >> This hot topic became a daily exaggerated rumor.

Due to the incident that happened this time, King Esvobus made Yuusuke assume the title of Hero, as he had shown great achievements and feats of valor. He had succeeded in diluting the impression of Floncanc being weak that was being made after the massacre of the fortress. Calling him a hero was to suppress the information of the damage being done, as it was a devised plan using a merit of battle to divert the people's resentment from escalating into a full scale war.

An official announcement from Blue Garden was given, "Our country has not given any form of command to raid a fortress, it was the arbitrary actions of the Wind Troupe," using this as an excuse, the government of Blue Garden denied all involvement with respect to the fort attack. Thus recognizing that an elite group of Blue Garden had gone wild.

"Damn Annoying!"

Within the room of the Central HQ facility under the city of Paula, amongst the Blue Garden leaders, "The Supreme leader, Izapnar" was cursing and swearing.

Due to this incident, the countries that were related to it had begun making the necessary arrangements, from its own citizens, its militia units, to the documents and notifications in which their elite group have completed. It seems that the other countries are slandering, "Your country couldn't even manage and satisfy your own troops," the government of Blue Garden have no choice to use this to cover up for it's appearance sake.

The question of the effectiveness of the activity and wiping out of the wind troupe was being raised within the parliament. As Blue Garden has only a few fire art users, their strongest hand was the elites of the wind arts.

It was due to their presence, which allowed provocations, that they had all the anti-Fonclanc know-hows, thus it was a painful lost. Although the wind troupe is still operating, but 1/5 of the attack force had been lost in Gear Hawk Fortress.

Just in a few mere decades, this new and rising country, Blue Garden, have been rapidly developing. Although it is their national policy to have equality among everyone, their neighboring countries do not share the same ideals.

Without sufficient war potentials, to start a war with Fonclanc might cause the countries of Nosusentesu and Gazetta to attack from behind, thus they cannot afford to pull out the wind troupes who were currently being deployed there. From now on, it will be too dangerous to start a war with Fonclanc.

The Supreme leader Izapnar had no choice but to take up King Esvobus’s policies.

While the leaders of Blue Garden were rotting in the oval office, Zeshald was guiding the trainees in the Divine arts leadership training facility of Paula. And he was thinking about the recent rumor that was spread around the country,"Hero of Gear Hawk".

It's been 2 month since Yuusuke had been summoned into this world, and 16 days since Zeshald crossed over to Blue Garden and he became employed as a palace knight. And on his first mission he had wipe out the wind troupe which attacked the fortress, thus achieving a large accomplishment that awarded him the honored title of Hero.

”To promote Yuusuke as a hero, it seems that he was within Esvobus expectations...."

This is all happening too rapidly, a chill was sent down Zeshald's spine as he remembered a vision about the "evil god" getting a foothold as it became the center of power. Although, it was him who encouraged Yuusuke with his insights and to learn more about this world.

In the documents and literatures, it described the awakening of the "evil god", it is said that it is possible to control the urge of destroying this world. But everything is just a speculation an unimaginable speculation.

"But if, things were to return as it was, it might have a negative impact."

-- Understanding how well the things of this world works. It would be better if I just destroy it-- a emotionless black eyes Yuusuke flashed before his eyes.

Zeshald sighed as he tried to shake off this scary imagination. Thanks to his current environment, his thinking had become increasingly negative lately. He started to laugh at himself. How will Yuusuke change this world in the future, I must keep a close watch on him.

"Erm, Instructor, Sir.... am I useless?"(Water girl apprentice)
"Huh? Oh no no, I was just lost in my thoughts."(Zeshald)

His young water arts student was showing an anxious expression as he let out a sigh. Zeshald followed up with,"It's nothing, I am sorry" and stated that there was no problem with her water arts. Relieved by hearing what he said about her water arts skill, she smiled. She was a cadet aspiring to join the "Water Troupe".

"Nevertheless, as long as you push your powers to the limits, you will have no problem becoming a member of the water arts corps within the milita"(Zeshald)
"Thank you. But, no matter what I absolutely would like to be attached to the Water Troupe.... to become of use to my sister."

Although her sister is currently a member of the elite team, they were both civilian employees of the militia under Blue Garden. Even though they differ in position and affiliation, there were hardly any conflict between them. Her sister is a member of an elite troupe and is currently on a mission where she could not return home very so often.

"After this mission, she will be able to take a vacation."
"Well, other than the elite group "Earth Troupe", everyone else is busy."(Zeshald)

She will be able to meet her sister within the same base even if they belong to different units, thus she was waiting patiently for her sister to return home for her vacation.

"Well, if that's the case do your best as for your sister under my supervision. By the way, which unit does your sister belongs to?"(Zeshald)
"Wind Troupe"

After hearing what Instructor officer Zeshald said, her face immediately became pale.

Sanc Adiet~~

It was a fine afternoon, on the upper floors of Volance palace. Violet was smacking her lips after eating her favorite choice of seasoned customized rara fruits. She then recommend some fruit alcohol to Yuusuke who was sitting on opposite side.

"Nope, I'm fine."(Yuusuke)
"What's this? Do you know that you're gonna make the title of hero weep by not drinking?"(Violet)

Violet was very happy to treat Yuusuke like a hero, but he himself is currently in a complex state of mind. After feeling the harsh reality which had happened in the fortress Yuusuke could feel the difference in temperament from Violet who hasn't been much in touch to reality.

"Heroes ..... the only few who survived, barely escaping while countless others had died."(Yuusuke)
"ooh, this is the first time you showed that kind of modestly of an important person."(Violet)

In contrast of Violet getting merrier by the minute, Yuusuke's feeling had steadily faded away. Yuusuke felt vexed as it was difficult to look at Violet who is currently in a joyful state. 'I guess that's how the position of what a princess is like to it's people.'

'Well, there isn't a need for me to know.'(Yuusuke thoughts)

As an entourage, Kreilov have always been telling Violet as a "Royal Princess" she should not to mingle with the so called lower class and there wasn't a need for her to know the extremities between the citizens and soldiers.

Knowing well about the people under her who are the working, an ideal ruler would understand how the mechanics of this world works. But that doesn't mean that she will ascend to the throne and become the future king, currently she is to stay as a " healthy princess with royal lineage" to welcome the next king as much as possible.

That same Violet who is currently planned for the future is right here. If everyone’s roles have been decided from the start, Violet's role would be the "Royal Princess". Thus I myself should just fulfill my role.

Coming up to this conclusion, Yuusuke, who knows his role, begins to pour his power into the rara fruit which he was currently holding in his hand.

"What kind of taste would you make next, will it be as spicy?"(Violet)
"Yuusuke.....?"(Violet)

Violet who was sensitive to her surrounding felt a change in atmosphere around Yuusuke and gaze at him quizzically. Her red eyes were motionlessly staring into his black eyes. "What's up?" Yuusuke tilted his head and smiled.

"Noooo! Stop that!"(Violet)

All of the sudden, Violet jumped up and started screaming, Yuusuke who was holding the rara fruit threw it upwards reflexively

"Wha-What's is it....?"(Yuusuke)
"Stop it with those eyes! I was just looking at your eyes! Until you did....."(Violet)

Violet's face turned red and she got exasperated while tears started to form around her eyes. Yuusuke was standing in daze as he saw the twin tail girl turned around and run away while her red dress retreated into the distance.

Yuusuke looked back to the sound of small birds and the lifting of the chair, standing in the corner of the room was Kreilov who had a difficult expression while clenching his fist on his chest and staring him. After awhile Krielov calmed down as he exhaled his breath.

"At first, I wanted to punch you right in the face, but because I think I do not have the qualifications to do so, I stopped."(Krielov)
"....."(Yuusuke)

"I have no idea what the fuck you saw in the fortress, most likely it is unimaginable. But ..... to mock those who don't know is just pure arrogance."(Krielov)
"That wasn't my intention....."(Yuusuke)

Not being able to complete his sentence, Yuusuke begin asking himself. By experiencing various kind of cognizance, and it is still an ongoing process, he certainly became a little irritated by Violet who seems to be going on at her usual pace.

"You're very honest....."(Krielov)

Krielov begin speaking about "the story that will only be heard here", Violet has always wanted to hear different kind of stories of people from many different sources. Taken aback by the thoughtless remark, "a princess who knows nothing", she wanted to revolt about it, but doesn't know how to.

"In my position, the princess doesn't need to know what happened on site. But --"(Krielov)

In terms of his personal feelings of a dedicating guard and educator, he caught glimpses of her intelligence on the insights of the government policy from the sheltered princess, and if it was possible he would like to show her the vast world. As Krielov confessed.

As Yuusuke admonished his own feelings. The voice of Zeshald resounded in his mind to broaden his insights. The previous idea of each and everyone have their own roles to fulfill, he didn't abandon this thought, but perhaps there are certain roles for people that only they could do.

But that is his own individual answer that he had grasped and derived on, respectively there will be a time when he will have to chose his own road.

'To receive something handed down by someone, doesn't mean that it is all determined from the beginning.'
Right now, Yuusuke wasn't strong enough, 'To defy the destiny that was given' to him.

Yuusuke who was searching for Violet went to the carriage porch, where he came across a familiar face.

"Hi, whatsupp captain? Why are you here?"(Fonke)
"Fonke, have you seen Violet?"(Yuusuke)

"The princess? She seem to have sneaked out awhile ago."(Fonke)
"The city it is....."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke requested Fonke to take him along to the city as he was heading out on the carriage. As he roughly knows the place to find her.

Using "Gear Hawk Hero"'s underling and a member of the party which accompanied him to the fortress which is a hot topic amongst the people, Fonke used this as a reason to become popular in the tavern that he frequently visits in the city.

On the other hand, Vermeer, Shaheed and Aisha couldn't walk around calmly, thus they did not head down to the commoner's district very often.

"Are you heading out to pick up the princess?"(Fonke)
"Yea, something like that."(Yuusuke)

Violet appeared to have boarded the carriage alone, and the surrounding soldiers/knights became her temporary guards immediately as she sneaked out of the palace. While the rest that were left behind were discussing whether there might be a commotion at the commoner district again.

She finally arrived at her destination after passing 2 district gates. The observation tower in the gate of the commoner district. As the evening time approaches, the various stalls that lined up on the main streets begin keeping and tidying up their shops.

Since they approved the special stalls around the vicinity of the observation towers, the lucky merchants of these stalls seem to hold out until the very last minutes before the sunsets.

"Well than Capt, I will be going to patrol near the tavern."(Fonke)
"Drink in moderation."(Yuusuke)

After dropping Yuusuke off, Fonke who was off-duty went to "patrol" in the tavern. If it was Aisha, he would have been scolded immediately for his attitude for being too frank to the captain of the royal knights, Yuusuke. But in this case, Yuusuke would also be scolded for his ,"awareness as a captain".

"Let's see now..."(Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke sent off Fonke, he looked up towards the observation tower. A red dress that stands out was there. After confirming the fluttering scarf, Yuusuke headed towards the observation tower.

"Hey, isnt that..... Gear Hawk Fortress hero?"*(bystander 1)
"He’s wearing the royal knights uniform, is it the real person?"(bystander 2)
"No way, Why would he be in this kind of place?"(bystander 1)
"Maybe he is here to check on the condition of the tower which he built....?"(bystander 2)

The people who were lining up around the observation tower waiting for their turn to ascend saw the appearance of Yuusuke and began spreading rumors. Not long ago the princess who sneaked out began climbing the tower, people were whispering about why she didn't have a attendant with her. After noticing Yuusuke, the gatekeeper immediately came over and greeted him.

"Thank you for your good work, the princess went to climb the tower earlier, but...."(Gatekeeper)
"Oh, I am here to pick her up."(Yuusuke)

When Violet ascended the tower, the people were allowed in, thus a collection of people waiting began to stack up below it, and after hearing that he was here to pick her up, the gatekeeper celebrated by breaking up into an expression of relief. As I thought, it had caused a little bit of a problem.

Yuusuke stood in front of the entrance to the observation tower and began to ponder as he looked up slightly. As it was the first time he would be climbing up the tower, due to the fact that previously he had just instantly built the tower, remembering the time when he was descending it, he felt breathless.

Currently, Yuusuke is equipped with his specially buffed pants, jacket and cloak, these items were the darkness god corps' clothing that were given to him. He enhanced them with physical resistance, divine art resistance, combustion resistance, freezing resistance and abnormal condition resistance. He also thought of giving some other items an increase in physical strength and movement assist bonus, making sure that he did not overlook any item that will seem convenient.

"Those rings, do you have 4 of them?"(Yuusuke)
"Eh? Y-Yes it's a total of 16 green crystals!"(Merchant)

"Hey, I am in a hurry keep the change"(Yuusuke)
"Th-Thank you so much"(Merchant)

He bought the 4 rings at a cheap price of 3 blue crystals, thus he begin enhancing them with stamina recovery and movement speed assist. As the value of the item was cheap the enhancement values isn't very high, there wasn't a problem as it will be only use for climbing up and down the stairs. Yuusuke equipped 2 of the rings onto his fingers and obtained the enhancement effect, thus beginning his one shot climb to the top from the entrance of the observation tower. By the way, the other 2 rings were for Violet to equip when they descend the tower.

Normally when one walks up to the 50 flight of stairs they would be breathless and their knee would have given up, although he was getting breathless he was still taking it easy. By dropping his pace a little he could recover some stamina, using this cycle technique it allows him to continue to climbing.

And throughout the climb, he did not even take a single break and arrived at the top floor. The sky was dyed halved in sunset colors, while the stars began to rise on the horizon in the opposite direction.

"You really, really like high places"(Yuusuke)
"....."(Violet)

After catching his breath Yuusuke looked towards the young girl who was resting her chin on the edge of the observation tower and calling out to her. Her red dress was waving while her scarf and her twin tail hair was fluttering in the wind. As Violet was standing there without turning her head back, Yuusuke when over to call her while slightly nudging her shoulders.

"Look over here."(Yuusuke)
"Don't touch me so friendly, you rude person."(Violet)

The hands that were placed on her shoulders were being twisted and swept away by Violet, on the contrary her harsh words doesn't seem to have any effect at all. Yuusuke grabbed both of her shoulders and turned her around to face him, Violet's face was still hanging down looking at the ground.

"Raise your head."(Yuusuke)
"Don't want to."(Violet)

"Come on look up."(Yuusuke)

Now he placed both his hands across her cheeks to raise her head. With tears in her red eyes, she protested by glaring at the "Rude person", and immediately diverted her angry eyes away.

"Look at my eyes"(Yuusuke)
"....." (Violet)

Timidly Violet glance into Yuusuke's eyes, as the 'distance' that she previously saw was no longer there she begin to feel relieved.

"I am so sorry for what happened just now"(Yuusuke)
"ye....."(Violet)

Violet had a blank look as Yuusuke apologized. Yuusuke explained that it was his misjudgment, while he was deep in his own thought at palace. As he wasn't straight in his mind, he just gave Violet a simple answer.

"If you really tend on become a great princess, a noble person, I think that Violet should know more about the common people."(Yuusuke)
"Really, do Yuusuke really think so?"(Violet)

Violet's eyes begin to shine as she got affirmation from Yuusuke. Everyone around her said and believe in "those who are nobles, doesn't need to know about the low born", while Zeshald and Yuusuke answered differently to her in smiling face, "go and experience the different things of this world."

"In the past, my dad use to tell me those words"(Violet)
"I see.....well, great people will always have their circumstances."(Yuusuke)

Even if one is to know such circumstances, it always lead to the understanding of others, and to polish one's self as Yuusuke preaches.

"Even I myself, don't understand those who think that they are self-important, the things that happened around the world and even myself."(Yuusuke)
"As such, I am the same as you."(Violet)

'Well if it is like this, why don't we go explore the world and deepen our knowledge', as they nodded at each other. Since Violet isn't able to move freely around away from the palace, Yuusuke will go explore the world to see and hear a variety of things from different places in her stead, only to return to tell her stories about his adventures.

Violet gave this special mission to the darkness god corp as it was under her direct command, thus Yuusuke became the only knight whose activities would be done outside of the palace.

"By the way, Yuusuke"(Violet)
"Ng?"(Yuusuke)
"Do you yourself know what you are doing right now?"(Violet)
".....er?"(Yuusuke)

As said as Yuusuke return to reality, he begin to realize that he was currently holding Violet in her cheeks with both his hands while tears were slowly flowing down, they were both standing under the starry sky atop of the observatory deck. The presences of the soldiers that were hiding behind the doorway while sneaking a peek could be felt.

"As I thought isn't it a lover's date?"
"There must be too much disturbance in the palace"
"But there wasn't any announcement for another fiance candidate right?"
"At any rate he is the hero"

Yuusuke released his hand immediately away from Violet, in order to stop any unexpected rumors he told the soldiers there that he was performing a ritual for a first of it's kind special mission.

17. The Daily Life and Rest Day of a Soldier

Dawn~~

In the upper floors of the Volance Palace, inside the royal knights dormitory, Yuusuke was toying with some small items in his room. By taking advantage of the special effects enhanced by the customization ability, he applied a recovery effect and a tranquility effect to his pajamas, and as a result it allowed him to awake earlier in the morning and shorten his sleeping time.

And so for the past few days, Yuusuke have been performing a daily routine of manufacturing customized accessories during the wee hours of the morning.

"Hmm, like I suspected the clearer the gems the better the enhancements"(Yuusuke)

Using his pay, he purchased precious gems to create rings and bracelets with special effects through his customization ability, this is to prepare himself with items to suit the various situations that he would

encounter. The numerical value compensation of the special effects were several times more than the cheap rings which he bought in the stall near the vicinity of the observation tower 8 days ago.

In order to hide the fact from the upper echelons, Violet and his underlings were to say that "it takes time to make even one" of these special effect equipment.

Thanks to his enhancement ability, Yuusuke generally have a daily peaceful and quiet life in the palace.

Due to the successful mission, when he returned from the fortress, whereby Yuusuke and his group unexpectedly wiped out an entire Blue Garden elite team, the so called "Princess Pet" have caused an upset and shock within each of the different factions of palace elites.

In particular, the rise of Yuusuke cause Princess Violet's fiance candidates to get wary of him, whose unexpectedly lucky. Also, being accompanied by his men who isn't talented made him more suspicious, thus they can't figure out where his loyalty lies.

As it was the policy of King Esvobus to avoid a full scale war, there wasn't really any opportunity to make a quick credit and get a feat of valor.

As a retaliation on Blue Garden's repeated provocation, there were people from the funeral of the victims who raised their voices to fan the flames of wars, but due to the lack of information of the divine arts user Yuusuke whom have said to have annihilated the enemy using aoe, the number of people who agreed to it were few.

Meanwhile, unhappy with Yuusuke being bestowed with the feat of valor, the fiance candidates set out to take testimonies from Yuusuke's underlings regarding the incident of the daggers which was "bestowed by Captain Yuusuke" due to it's incredible performance.

Just by holding it you could feel yourself being powered up, your body becomes lighter and it also amplifies your divine arts, although the appearance seems like an ordinary dagger. One of the fire soldiers equipped this dagger for a divine arts trial and he was able produced a 1.5 times larger size fireball than his usual.

So they approached them with all means to get those daggers, but Vermeer and his party refused them politely by saying," this item is personally bestowed to us by our captain". And so as to avert jealously and trouble in the future they shrewdly said, "if you absolutely want one you could go and negotiate with our captain.".

After knowing about the situation, he consulted with Violet and Kreilov to work out a plan. By re-adjusting the stats on the 4 rings which he previously use for the ascending and descending the observation tower, he gave them to each of the 4 captains of the royal knights.

"The Ring of Fire Arts", "The Ring of Water Arts", The Ring of Earth Arts", "The Ring of Wind Arts" these were the enchantments the rings were adjusted to to fit the different divine arts. Changing the design to fit the different type of divine arts element, these rings possess a higher amplification ratings compared to Vermeer and his party daggers.

Krielov equipped the ring that was given to him and tested out his own fire arts. Normally when he imbued fire to his spear there would be a wavering flame that seemed to twine and blaze around the spear, but with the ring the flame seem to be from the spear itself like it was focusing on the spear, thus appearing like a flaming spear instead of a spear wearing flames.

The flaming spear performance became the center of attention in eyes of the soldiers, while the soldiers were still in awe, Krielov begin to discuss about it with Yuusuke.

"I would be very delighted, if you could make these equipment for my subordinates as well."(Krielov)
"I could, but I can only make them in my spare time in between missions, as it takes quite alot of time....."(Yuusuke)

This came to a mutual understanding between the soldiers as, "if you would like to have equipment made by Yuusuke, you must not interfere with him". As a result from the palace to the city, almost no one would dare to come and offend Yuusuke's mood.

In this case "almost", although there were some exceptions. In the first place, there weren't much ways to upset Yuusuke's mood.
"Hey, Yuusuke. Can I have one of those rings?"(Hivodir)
"Not yet. Shouldn't the vice captains be next on the list? Usually."(Yuusuke)

While on his way towards the dinning halls, he coincidentally encountered Hivodir in the hallway and walked along side with him, thus he appealed to Hivodir that manufacturing process is time consuming, "the wait is roughly around 50 days".

"If one must say, certainly with the god corps, I may be just one of the elites, but within the palace, my nobility rank far surpasses the captains."(Hivodir)
"I don't know, and I am not aware."(Yuusuke)

Having friendship with her highness Violet, not to mention having the ability to be touted as a hero, this darkness god captain is already in the same standings as the other 4 god captains. While the majority of the royal knights have their hesitation to approach Yuusuke, but the one whose the worst person to encounter with, Hivodir was the only person with the assertiveness to approach him.

In his own way, the signs of the burden of being the lineage of a high ranking noble family, having a complex of not being strong enough, while feeling that his pure divine arts power isn't enough, thus wanting to compensate them through other means and changing the state from when he came here.

For such a person like him, he was the only one who approached Yuusuke, without realizing he used his family name and inheritance as a tactic, although it was just a waste of time.

"Well, I expected the best equipment appropriate for me."(Hivodir)
"Ehh, you're not eating?"(Yuusuke)

While Yuusuke and Hivodir walked into the dinning hall, Hivodir suddenly swung his hand and placed it on Yuusuke's back, Yuusuke turn his head back and looked at him, Hivodir said with a killer smile, "In the morning, I had taken breakfast at my parent's house."

The waiter came in front of them was pushing the food wagon as he tried to intrude on them, Yuusuke felt he was interesting as he left an impression on him while he walks into the dinning hall.

"Yo-YOU! Watch where you are going, you weird guy"(Hivodir)
"Awawawa, I am so sorry! Are you okay?"(Waiter)

"Hmm, that's a surprisingly interesting guy."(Yuusuke)

Afternoon. As usual Yuusuke went to show his face to his underlings in the resting/waiting room for the god corp soldiers. A few days back when Violet brought Yuusuke and visited this place, the overall atmosphere is said to be like a tavern, now it had been transformed into a furnished room not inferior to the resting/waiting rooms of the royal knights.

Although there isn't any wasteful luxurious decorations, there were special sofa and tables that could not be found in the upper floors.

"Oh, the captain is here."(Fonke)
"Thanks for the good work, Captain Yuusuke."(Aisha)

"Yoz. Today, only Fonke and Aisha is here, where are the others?"(Yuusuke)
"Isotta is off-duty today, old man Vermeer is out patrolling."(Fonke)

Shaheed is currently at the training grounds doing his personal training. Although within the resting/waiting room it wasn't just Yuusuke's underlings only, there were other different groups of god corp soldiers inside too, but most of them weren't hesitated to exchange dialogue with Yuusuke unlike the Royal knights.

"Mr Captain, could you produce the fruit drink flavor again, please."
"I am sorry to disturb, the lamp have broke.....will you be able to fix it?"

"Mr Captain, the underwear which you made it for me before, could you make it one size larger for the chest(boobs)?

As usual the general soldiers who have a variety of requests came over to him. Using the excuse of meeting up with his underlings, Yuusuke have been frequently going to the resting/waiting room, he had repaired and customized the furniture in the room, adjusting the various taste of the fruit wine which they brought to him, thus deepening their fellowship between them.

As it was Yuusuke's mission to observe the common people, listening to their voices, and report the findings of what he heard to Violet. He is also able to hear the different kind of gossips and stories from the general soldiers who goes onto patrol mission within the city. From interesting stories to depressing stories that causes one to frown, a variety of stories that he have heard.

A horror story about a royal ghost whose body was buried under the city due to imprisonment, a story about a man who wet his pants when he reached the top of the observation tower! There are also stories like these which can't be laughed at.

"Captain are you heading to the city today? Hey tag me along"(Fonke)
"Err, since I have always been heading towards the direction of the observation tower, today I want to explore a different location."(Yuusuke)

While responding to the soldiers requests, Yuusuke handed over the customized fruit liquor and jerky to Fonke, whereby the drinking group made a weird sound of "UHyo", while hastily leaving the resting/waiting room.

Looking at the way they escape, it was amazing how Aisha's faced migrated from a shocked look to an angry face in mere seconds. As it have already been the 4th time she scolded them.

"Captain!"(Aisha)
"Hiyo~"(Yuusuke)

Hearing that Yuusuke dashed away with all his might down the corridor.

While leaving the palace without a carriage, Yuusuke make use of his movement enhancement ring and started running towards the commoner district. The items that were enhanced with special effects of defense were the darkness corp uniform set which included gloves, belt, boots, the other parts including rings, bracelets and etc.

Equipped with a mantle, running past the streets of the noble and middle class district like a shadow as if a sudden gust made by a divine art user. The figure of the "Hero of Gear Hawk Fortress" running, became recognized as a famous sight in the city.

"Hmm let's see, today I shall head over to the direction of the morph ranches."(Yuusuke)

For convenience, Yuusuke used the direction of which the sun rises to the east, and started walking towards the northwest side of the city. It was the exact opposite direction of where the observation tower stood. By the way, Gear Hawk Fortress is located at the west. The village of Rufk is a little south of the direction east.

On the west side of the city were once hectares of ranches, but due to the recent activities from Blue Garden, there were many appearances of wild beasts and monsters wreaking havoc, thus the planned relocation towards the north or east side of the city.

Yuusuke was currently walking down this road of the commoner district when suddenly he saw a familiar face and stopped afoot.

"Isotta!"(Yuusuke)

Rather than her normal soldier appearance, Isotta was wearing a casual city clothes, while trying to trot past hugging a bag on her chest covering half her face. Thus, Yuusuke's eyes began to follow her movement as she gave out an impression that doesn't really feel like a soldier, but an ordinary girl.

Isotta was hugging a bag, and without noticing Yuusuke, she walked out of the crowd into an alleyway which leads out of the city. For some reason or another, Yuusuke felt it was weird and headed towards the alley way leisurely. As Isotta stride was small even while trotting, Yuusuke was able to walk normally to catch up with her.

After exiting the dim alley, it was a corner where the artless live, a slum which have been spread out like an artless street. What does a child like Isotta doing around the artless street? And, Yuusuke being worried about Isotta, began to set foot into the artless street.

As the residents saw the appearance of Yuusuke, whose a royal knight, they all panic and shut themselves inside their houses, there were those who ran into the side alleys to hide, as they hastened themselves to not standout. From the reaction of this area, it seems that apparently the divine users doesn't have a good impression to those living in the outer area of the city.

"It seems like, this is their reaction if the opponent is a soldier, due to the 'criminals' being the divine art users and the victims are the artless, it is conceivable that they are too scared to move/do anything."

There was almost no topics regarding the artless that was being told by the soldiers. Thinking about using his hearing to pinpoint her location, Yuusuke drops his thoughts as he saw Isotta heading inside a house.

Along the way to this place, you could see the artless exchanging greetings with Isotta normally. Unlike the usual soldier figure, she seems like a ordinary girl, and currently she is having a friendly exchange with some acquaintance.

Isotta was currently exchanging her greetings with an old lady normally, but the time when she walk passed Yuusuke with averted eyes, and her timid atmosphere when she walked into the road around the vicinity.

"Hmm"(Yuusuke)

The little stand alone house which Isotta entered was made up of square stones and wood. As Yuusuke walked up to the front of the house, he could hear a weird speech coming from inside.

"Are you heading out again? You could do the things slowly though"(Man’s voice)
"Yes.....but, I don't want to be left behind in the god corps training.....I don't want to be a burden to the my fellow comrades."(Isotta)

The usual stuttering Isotta dived under the cloth door of the house as she saw the appearance of Captain Yuusuke, she did a sudden jump.

"Hiii! Cap-Captain!"(Isotta)
"Yoz"(Yuusuke)

"Eerrrmm Why-why are you here?"(Isotta)
"Well, I was wandering around the city, and thinking where should I go...."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke wanted to say that he came here with a purpose but if felt difficult to say,"I came with a purpose", though the words seems a little uncomfortable if you put it that way. Isotta who misinterpret the meaning of his sentence begin to force an explanation out.

"Th-th-this isn't what it seems! I didn't mean to hide it! To-to be released from duty.....I-I will be in trouble"(Isotta)
"Hey, calm down, calm down. I have no idea what is going on here"(Yuusuke)

".....what's going on, Isotta"(Man’s voice)

The voice seems different from the man's voice which he heard just now, his head and body is being wrapped with bandages as this largely build white haired young man came out of the cloth door. Standing behind the young man were 2 elderly, a man and a woman who is anxiously looking towards them. Those 2 elders were also the artless as both their hair were white.

The young man who had bandages winded across his body immediately had a convinced expression the moment he looked at Yuusuke.~~

"So you are the Hero of Gear Hawk?"(man's voice)

He was standing there with a fearless smile while saying so.

18. An [Artless] Traveler

Both of Isotta's parents were [Artless]. If a divine arts user got pregnant with an [artless] child, she usually opted for an abortion, or, if a child was born, he was given over to [artless] parents to foster him. Likewise, if an [artless] conceived a child blessed by one of the gods, there were a lot of cases of the child being given over to the ability users to foster him.

In Isotta's case, her parents were unable to find any ability user to foster her. As her parents were living in the outskirts of the city, they believed that she would be accepted in the ability user society as she became an adult and they have raised her in the [artless] satellite town.

As Isotta was the only one with green hair and eyes amongst the blonde children it was not easy for her to merge in, so she grew up to be slightly introverted.

In the social system, until the child became an adult, he was treated according to the social status of his parents. In the event that a blessed child was being taken care of by [artless] parents, upon becoming an adult, only the child received the benefits according to the blessing he/she had received from the gods. As soon as she reached an age that allowed her to enlist into the divine god corps Isotta joined the corps to be able to support her aging parents.

She was selected as a member of the darkness god corps, and with that her pay rose as well. She intended to use the money for her parents, both of whom became unable to work on the fields after suffering injuries in an accident. Nevertheless, the palace guard god corps / royal knights was an organization for elites of this social system.

Although she was one of the members, it might only be temporary as she had obtained that position by pure luck because she was the only communication type wind arts user present at the time the members were being selected.

Isotta was feeling uneasy, she was afraid that she would be forced to resign from the darkness god corps if the fact that she lived with the [artless] became known. While they were talking in front of her house, Isotta's mind was dizzy as she was thinking about her parents and about what would happen after she invited Yuusuke inside. Finally, she made up her mind to be open about it.

"So it's like that."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke finished talking. ["As I thought, this person is slightly different."], Isotta could barely stand from the tension and uneasiness, but after looking at Yuusuke, she felt that he was somehow different from the other people in the palace.

“Heee, so you are a traveler…”(Yuusuke)

Isotta’s parents invited him in and Yuusuke accepted the offer. After apologizing for intruding into their house he started listening to the story of a wounded man.

He was carried into the house after sustaining grave injuries not long before Yuusuke got an official call to serve the palace. He got himself injured when he was trying to protect Isotta’s parent’s mooph farm from the demon beast attack. He called himself Shinha, an [artless] traveler who was wandering around different countries.

Isotta’s parents did not have enough money to call a healing type water arts user to heal this man. Moreover, no water arts user would be interested in traveling all the way to the [artless] district to heal some suspicious traveler. Isotta’s parents offered Shinha to stay in their house while he recovered from his injuries and the traveler accepted their invitation.

In this world travelers were not a rare sight. However, an [artless] traveling alone was something that could be called a little strange. To add to that, he was wielding a sword. At least in Fonclanc, with the exception of hunting, the [artless] almost never held any arms, so to the locals this guy would only raise suspicions.

“Is that sword real?”(Yuusuke)

“…Ah, but of course. So you are skeptical about me after all?”(Shinha)

Shinha assumed that Yuusuke was cautious about him being armed. After all, divine arts users considered [artless] to be a powerless existence [which remains powerless no matter what they do]. Such notion was especially strong in Fonclanc where a caste system was present.

Thus, a matter such as an armed [artless] traveling in the capital may not be overlooked by a palace guard/royal knight of Fonclanc, not to mention an elite one that is being applauded as a hero… but —

“It’s not that. I just haven’t seen a sword like this before.”(Yuusuke)

Shinha doubted Yuusuke who was fascinated by the strange sword. One way or another, Yuusuke did not show any signs of investigating him, neither could he sense a different kind of aura that he remembered from before when a person had a few of his lackeys hidden nearby.

At this time, Isotta’s mother brought some tea saying, “Thanks for always taking care of my daughter. Please enjoy this tea as a token of appreciation.”

“Ah, thank you.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke took the teacup and sipped the tea. Seeing this, Shinha’s doubts turned to interest as he watched Yuusuke enjoying the tea. The guy before him bowed his head to an old [artless] woman, moreover he drank the cheap looking tea, offered by an [artless], without any hesitation. Shinha could not find any trace of discrimination in Yuusuke’s actions. There were nearly no divine art users that didn’t show some kind of supremacy towards the [artless].

“… Can I take a look at it?”(Yuusuke)

Shinha held out the great sword, he had stationed against the wall, to Yuusuke. Seeing a real sword for the first time, Yuusuke gladly accepted the sword. It was a two meter length two handed sword and its weight followed its appearance.

“Hmm? Is it broken?”(Yuusuke)

“Hmm, you understood that by just holding it?”(Shinha)

Yuusuke opened the customization menu immediately after touching the sword and confirmed that the sword was broken at around the middle of the blade. The materials to make it were of an even higher class than the ones used in shouka (currency crystals) minting – it was a silver greatsword. Yuusuke had also noticed that the blade had quite a lot of points remaining in the battle parameters customization window.

“This sword, did it break in the battle with those beasts that attacked the farm?”(Yuusuke)

“No… Before I entered Fonclanc kingdom, I have wandered through Blue Garden territory. The sword broke when I had to fight those guys.”(Shinha)

He traveled through Blue Garden, mostly through forests, trying to avoid the main roads as much as he possibly could. While traveling along the country border, he once encountered a small work force group who seemed to be the ones at fault for damaging the sword. Isotta listened to his tale, with eyes wide from astonishment as Yuusuke proposed to fix the sword.

“Do you mind if I fix it? It seems to be a good quality sword already, but I think I can add some enchantments to it.”(Yuusuke)

Isotta was astonished as she listened to their conversation, unable to ignore the plethora of hints about the origins of this mysterious traveler. Yuusuke, however, showed no ill emotions and that piqued Shinha’s interest even more.

Anyone holding a military position, after hearing this tale, would be reminded of [a certain place] that Yuusuke did not know of yet. Because Shinha did not know of Yuusuke, he accepted Yuusuke’s ignorance as profound tolerance. While not necessarily a mistake, it was a misunderstanding.

Knowing that a hero of Gearhawk was before him and wanting to see his power firsthand, Shinha allowed Yuusuke to repair the sword.

Yuusuke meddled in the customization menu for a while, and after looking through the customization options available, Yuusuke asked Shinha a variety of questions.

“That’s right… to kill a human, I think that the sword should be lighter, but if it were to become too light its power would become unreliable in turn.”(Shinha)

According to Shinha, it was troubling if the blade was too focused on killing, so he asked to leave the offensive properties unchanged. Instead of the killing potential, he wanted the blades fighting potential to be maxed out, so he asked to set the blade’s endurance parameter to be as high as possible.

Moreover the sword gained an attack speed buff, and, taking into consideration that the traveler is a lone person, it was also enchanted with strength recovery and healing effects.

Shinha viewed Yuusuke, who was loitering with his finger in the air before a broken sword while asking various questions about battle style and battle preferences, as a crafting type divine arts user that used such chatter to allow the customer to relax while moving the finger as a means to raising his concentration.

To these craftsmen the questions themselves did not have any substantial meaning. Fixing a broken sword required a lot of concentration which the man before him probably reached by chatting. Now that he thought of it, the very divine arts craftsman that crafted him this blade also was a very talkative person who only stopped talking when he had to be extremely careful.

“Hmm, this should do it… Execute!”(Yuusuke)

The silver greatsword was enveloped in light. Isotta was already used to this light and viewed the customization with a [what a beautiful light] expression on her face, while her parents were fascinated by the light effects.

Shinha, having traveled various countries and seen various divine arts, also saw such an effect for the first time. After a while, the light subsided, leaving only the shining particles fluttering in the air and a greatsword with a beautiful silver blade lying on the floor.

“I added a healing effect just in case. I think it should also be able to heal your current wounds.”(Yuusuke)

“Healing effect?”(Shinha)

Doubting Yuusuke’s words Shinha picked up the sword. The moment he touched it, Shinha felt power surging throughout all his body and his wounds suddenly became hot and started to itch.

“This is…!”(Shinha)

Untying the bandage, Shinha saw that his wound which ran from his back to the chest through the flank, was slowly closing. The healing effect was comparable to a considerably skilled healing type water arts user, but Shinha could not hide his astonishment for his prized sword to show such an effect.

“Firstly, as requested I left the attack power unchanged, later on I modified the attack speed and stamina.” (Yuusuke)

“As requested…”(Shinha)

Yuusuke proposed Shinha to try out the improvements on the sword as he was inspecting the condition of the blade. But first, the sword was given to Isotta’s parents, so their injuries could be healed as well. Afterwards Yuusuke went outside and, after locating a suitable plot of land, started customizing the ground to create a training dummy.

In the meantime, Shinha was practicing with the sword to get his body used to the attack speed buff. The blade obviously did not become lighter yet he was able to swing it much faster.

“The training dummy is done,“ informed Yuusuke, as he began showing at something m that looked like an earth golem. It was made from the soil, but it was as hard as rock. Shinha was startled by the sudden appearance of the training dummy, but as he wanted to ascertain the strength of his sword, he asked, “Can I try out my sword on that?”

“Sure. The sword was pretty tough to begin with, so there shouldn’t be any problems.”(Yuusuke)

Being assured by Yuusuke that there is no way this sword would dull or break, Shinha was only half convinced as he faced the scarecrows/training dummies made from earth and stones.

The training dummies were aligned in a triangle pattern. Shinha lowered his back and instantly slashed two of them. The bisected remains spun in the air from the power of the slash.

“WOW! Amazing!”(Yuusuke)

“…That surprised me. The speed of the sword was great”(Shinha)

Checking if there was any damage to the blade of his sword, Shinha could not withhold his smile as he marveled at his own reflection in the sword. Isotta hid behind Yuusuke’s back after witnessing this slightly wild, strong smile.

After marveling at his blade for a while, Shinha returned it to the scabbard, thanked Yuusuke, and asked a question as if ascertaining something.

“I am thankful to you from all my heart. Still, doing so much… for a stranger like me.. is it alright with you? After all I am an [artless].”(Shinha)

“Aaah. I am not a person to prejudice people like that. You helped the parents of my subordinate. This is my token of gratitude. You will accept it, won’t you?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke also asked him to keep the fact of him being able to grant various special effects to items to himself. A smile of a person enjoying something from the depths of his heart, resembling Violet’s smile, appeared on Shinha’s face as he understood that Yuusuke was not lying.

“You are an interesting divine arts user. I am Shinha Trueyard of Gazzetta. I will become your strength one day.“(Shinha)

Yuusuke firmly shook Shinha’s right hand, which he offered after saying his thanks. Shinha continued to analyze the guy that he had found interest in, as Yuusuke replied to the handshake he viewed as an ordinary action.

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Watching a view of a Sanc Adiet street that was gradually enveloped by the evening, Yuusuke headed towards the guard station alongside Isotta. Having had his sword fixed and body healed, Shinha said that he will carry on with his journeys after spending the night in the city.

“Come to think of it, people of the [artless] district interacted normally with you, Isotta.”(Yuusuke)

“Yes, I am… it was because I was living there since I was little.”(Isotta)

Yuusuke asked if there were any other guards that were close with the [artless]. Isotta answered that by silently shaking her head.

“Because everyone… fears the guards. Whenever divine arts users get involved, it always means trouble.”(Isotta)

“Are they always at a disadvantage?”(Yuusuke)

Isotta nodded, shaking her short green hair.

“Hmmmm…”(Yuusuke)

The caste system was based on the faith in the four great gods. Most of the people were able to use the divine arts as a sign of protection from either of the gods and the people who could not use the divine arts were thought to have not been blessed by any of the gods.

Because the caste issue was deeply rooted in the country’s religion, raising the status of the [artless] people was a very difficult problem. Still, this problem and the problem of guards not performing their duties were entirely different issues. Yuusuke believed that trouble… crime control had nothing to do with being the divine arts users or the [artless].

“No matter what social differences they have, no one should cut corners when public safety or order is concerned.”(Yuusuke)

“Captain…?”(Isotta)

Thus Yuusuke became engrossed with thinking of a way to lessen the chasm between the people.

19. True State of the Blue Garden

Before dawn—

In the shadow of the huge protective wall of the city fortress Paula, Zeshald was summarizing the information that he had gathered on the internal situation of Blue Garden, while deciding on his future actions according to the information about the current state of Fonclanc, which he obtained from a collaborator (Reifold).

“I see, so Yuusuke performed splendidly this time. Still, even just listening to what he had done… his power seems tremendous.”(Zeshald)
“Even though I have expected something like that from him, he has astounded me as well.”(Reifold)

Reifold laughed even though he himself nearly got caught in the mayhem.

Right now the fortress city Paula was concerned with restoring their combat strength due to the annihilation of the wind troupe. Divine arts military groups were swarmed with recruitment and conscription applications. Because of that, Zeshald’s surveillance get looser, day by day.

“I will soon go meet with the water priestess [Queen].”(Zeshald)
“In the main capital, Cofta?”(Reifold)

When the country was established, the believers of the water god Shalnar flocked around the temple and eventually settled down. Afterwards they created a small kingdom. The nation was officially ruled by a queen, who had a massive support from her citizens and resided in the Shalnar temple-castle at the heart of Cofta.

Currently the country was actually ruled from the second capital – the fortress city of Paula. Izapnar, who was the ruler of this city, had nearly absolute control of militaristic and civilian affairs of the country. It could be said, that the country was controlled from the council room situated in the underground level of the fortress.

There was no antagonism between the water priestess, queen Rishause, and the supreme commander Izapnar. However, it did not mean that their political views and opinions were the same. Their relation was more akin to mutual ignorance, as both capitals were ruled independently.
Looking at this situation, Zeshald saw it as an opportunity that he could take advantage of.

“In that case, I should deliver this information to the other side (Fonclanc).”(Reifold)
“I am sorry to make you do this all the time.”(Zeshald)
“Don’t mind it. I have already received a reward from Yuusuke.”(Reifold)
“Reward?”(Zeshald)

Reifold took out a small trinket, resembling an insect, and showed it to the confused Zeshald.

“This fishing hook is amazing.”(Reifold)

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Around the same time that Yuusuke spotted Isotta on the streets of Sanc Adiet, Zeshald was walking along the road leading from the city center up to the main fortress of Paula. Most of the common people lived in the north side of the fortress city, slightly away from the city center. Meanwhile the important facilities were concentrated in the fortress constructed below the city center.

Paula was built at the foot of Bouzas mountain range that occupied more than half of Blue Garden’s territory. The fortress that Zeshald was walking towards, looked like a semicircle wall with a huge circumference. Its purpose was to protect against attacks from the kingdom of Fonclanc. Despite the fact that this road was far away from the city center, many mobile street stalls lined up against it.

Every divine arts organization had its residential and training quarters inside these walls. There were also civilians and divine arts militia who lived farther away from the city center. Because of that, there were a lot of vacant rooms the militias could declare [belonging to “this and that” group] and use it relatively freely.

“…Hmm.”(Zeshald)

As Zeshald walked through one such lines of mobile stalls, he stopped as something caught his interest. Several [artless] people, wearing slave collars, crowded around one stand. One of them seemed to have been injured in the leg. This person sat down as to lessen the burden on her leg, but she was constantly worried about slight bleeding.

Zeshald slowly approached her and healed the injury with his heading arts. Woman, with a thankful expression on her face, wanted to say something as a thanks but her expression changed to fear as she was whipped by her master for speaking on her own accord.

“That is enough!. He can understand you without speaking.”(Whipping man)
“…”(Woman)

The [artless] woman lowered her head. At that time a man, who was seemingly their master, came out of the shop and spoke in a commanding voice.

“Did you do something to my artless?”(Slave owner)
“No, I saw that one of them was injured so I healed her.”(Zeshald)
“?…! Yo-you are…Head instructor Zeshald!”(Slave owner)

As this goon recognized Zeshald, the two hastily changed their attitudes. In addition to being a valuable and talented water arts user, Zeshald had quite some influence in the Blue Garden. In between these facts, Zeshald’s mastery of water arts was especially well known throughout the fortress city.

“Oooh so that’s how it was, however… the stock we have now is but the leftovers.”(Slave owner)
“Don’t worry. Healing is my hobby so don’t mind about what I just did.”(Zeshald)

As the slave merchant hesitated about how to reward Zeshald, the head instructor waved it off with “I don’t need any money.” After the slave merchant left, taking all of the slaves with him, Zeshald breathed a sigh while thinking of the treatment of the [artless] in this country.
In a country with a caste system, the [artless] were treated as people that have not been blessed by either of the gods. However in Blue Garden, a country that boasted of equality between the divine arts users, those that could not use any divine arts were treated as they were not even human.

“Head instructor Zeshald!”(Plausha)
“Hm? Ah, Plausha-kun? Are you healthy enough to go out already?”(Zeshald)
“Yes, I am so sorry to have worried you… Come tomorrow, I will be able to resume training so I will be in your care again.”(Plausha)

A female water arts user cadet greeted Zeshald. Some days ago she suddenly took a break from her training, but it seems that her aim to join the water troupe had not wavered.

“I have decided on it a long time ago but… my sister is not here anymore.”(Plausha)
“… I see…”(Zeshald)

Last information regarding her sister came from Gearhawk fortress. Afterwards her body was returned by Fonclanc. Plausha’s form, standing dumbfounded before the slightly mangled corpse of her sister, was still fresh in Zeshald’s mind. To brighten up the atmosphere, Plausha changed the topic of their discussion.

“By the way, head instructor when you lived in Fonclanc, you used to keep a lot of [artless]. Were you using them for some water arts experiments?”(Plausha)
“No, I lived along with them in their village.”(Zeshald)
“Eh? Along with the [artless]?”(Plausha)

Plausha was completely stupefied on how could Zeshald not keep at least one [artless] in his house.

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“This is a difficult problem alright.”(Violet)
“It seems so.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke immediately reported to Violet of what he had learnt that day upon returning to the castle. As he was talking about Shinha, surprise showed on Violet’s face for a moment. Krielov’s face color changed and

he jumped out from his seat, but was properly restrained by Violet who forbade him from ever speaking about this.
Thus, Yuusuke was also forbidden from talking to anyone about this matter. Yuusuke nodded, accepting these restrictions after being told that the details will be explained to him at a later time, as he understood that he got himself into some complicated mess.

Afterwards they discussed [artless] problems and the relationship between the [artless] and the arts users. Violet crossed her arms and replied to Yuusuke that giving orders to the common guards and reforming the public opinion might be difficult as this solution also involved religious beliefs.

“To begin with, trying to change the very foundations of the country would throw Fonclanc into utter chaos.”(Violet)
“I guess so.”(Yuusuke)
“If that happened, you would have to rely on your own strength, right?”(Violet)
“Judging by the numbers alone, we, divine arts users, outnumber artless. In the end, the artless people would probably be forced into an even harsher conditions.”(Krielov)

Reasoning about how to increase the social position and rights of the [artless] within the current caste system, Krielov speculated that there is a possibility of improving the current [artless] stereotype over the next few decades by educating children about the improvement of the [artless] rights.
However, this method would be impossible to execute as it would be surely met with opposition.

“Still, something can be done regarding public order and discrimination.”(Krielov)
“Do you have some good plan?”(Yuusuke)
“It’s simple. Using [knight’s honor] as a reason we can tighten guards’ attitude about their duties.”(Krielov)
“Oooh, as expected of an elite! It’s a really great idea, but…”(Yuusuke)

A shade of disappointment began to show on Krielov’s face, as Yuusuke denounced his idea explaining what value does [honor] hold to [simple guards] in a slightly apologetic tone. They used their wages to eat, and you can’t eat honor. It was that simple.

“I guess they would value making their living over the pride and honor.”(Krielov)

Presented with a choice between family and pride, ordinary people would choose family. Therefore, the solution would first need to be suitable for them. While it could not be said that pride and honor were worthless, these people could not fill their mouths with it.

“Well, it’s not that I completely disagree with your opinion.”(Yuusuke)
“Hmm… certainly… Our king also prefers truth over honor.”(Krielov)

While Krielov grumbled, thinking about this as more and more wrinkles appeared on his forehead, Violet, taking over his place in the discussion, nodded while remembering that the corruption and bribes, rampant amongst the bureaucrats, obviously were also present between the common guards as well as the commoners.

“Changing the common sense might not be easy, however, with the cooperation of the top brass of the country, there might be a quick and easy method to ease the situation.”(Violet)
“Oooh? And what is that method?”(Yuusuke)

“Announcing a law protecting the [artless], ” Violet cut to the chase.

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“Faatheerr~~ Please hear me out, I have a request for you~”(Violet)

The king was then asked to think of some appropriate reason to issue a law protecting the [artless]. There were few slavers (owners) in Fonclanc, compared to Blue Garden, so even if such law was to be issued, there would be few people who would be troubled by it.

Slavery was not illegal in Fonclanc, but [artless] were treated as little more than slaves. Because of the minute differences in treatment towards the [artless], the king considered that the effect of the protection law would be minimal. Incidentally, the number of slaves was greater than the number of divine arts users and this was true with other countries as well. The quality of the slaves was closely linked to the status of the slave owner. If one could afford to keep arts users slaves, he was seen as someone of a higher status than the one with only [artless] slaves.

“Lady Violet has started blabbering strange things again.”(Bureaucrat A)
“It’s because of the influence of that man. What is the point of a law, protecting the [artless] and the like?”(Bureaucrat B)

As bureaucrats whispered this in secret, king Esvobus allowed Violet to have her way (after being assaulted by her) and she quickly left the audience room (skipping) to return to Yuusuke so they could work out the contents of this law.

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The training facility, used specifically for training the elites, was located near the second capital, Paula, slightly inside the mountain range near where the fortress city was built. The institution was similar to a military academy, where facilities are reserved only for the elite of high social standing whom were set to join one of the elite military groups.

A gravel mountain road led to the gates of this facility. From this road, you could reach the road leading to the Blue Garden’s first capital, Cofta.

The City of Cofta spread around the Shalnar’s temple. The only open space was near the entrance to the summit, thus countless living quarters and facilities were situated in the tunnels, dug within the mountain. This city was the capital which was built at the highest altitude on the mountains in Kaltcio.

The temple on the summit acted as a royal castle. Queen Rishause, who was also the priestess of Shalnar, desired nothing more than a quiet life. She sighed melancholically, having received a letter that the consul had delivered to her. Besides the audience request, only the sender’s name, Zeshald, was written in it.

He was a former royal divine arts instructor of Fonclanc, who had recently taken up the position of head instructor of the divine arts in Blue Garden. Thinking that the supreme commander Izapnar was involved again, her mood became heavy.

Fourteen years ago when her father, the founder of the nation, died Izapnar, devoted close aide of the father, was appointed an official guardian of the then sixteen year old queen until her official enthronement. Izapnar worked diligently, and through his devotion, the emerging country became a major power on par with powerful nations like Fonclanc. For his deeds, people started to worship him as a symbol of Blue Garden. Thus the support he received from the masses was enormous.

Izapnar, using the sense of impending danger and fall of a country that people felt after their king's death, started to carry out a secret project in order to protect the country from its neighbors. He hastened the construction of the defensive fortress Paula, which purpose was to protect the country from Fonclanc. During this construction project, his faction steadily became the center of the political world of his country. Although former royalists and palace officials expressed concern regarding his rapid rise to power, they avoided criticizing him and believed and supported him as he had the trust of the royal figurehead, Rishause, and carried the authority of the king.

Around the time of the queen's enthronement, it came to light that Izapnar's loyalty lied with the late king and not with the princess. A vague shade of ambition could also be felt from his actions. However, as she had no one to rely on, Rishause could only treat him as former king's loyal retainer.
As a result, everything from daily tasks to the construction orders, Rishause was informed long after these events happened.

"I guess it's impossible… to decline the audience."(Rishause)

Sighing once again, Rishause called her close aide.

20. Turning the Tide

"Yuusuke how much do you know about Gazetta?"(Violet)
"I only know the name"(Yuusuke)

"I see, I myself do not know much either"(Violet)
"What the hell!?"(Yuusuke)

After getting the promise of protection for the artless from King Esvosbus, Violet suddenly remember about Simba, who was in the contents of the stories that Yuusuke had talked about. It might become a reference that would be useful in the future.

"I do not know the details, all that I know is the information provided by Zeshald. The king of that country is a artless."(Violet)
"Does that mean it is a country formed by the artless?"(Yuusuke)

Violet, who doesn't really know the answer, looked towards Krielov. "So whatcha wanna know?" as Krielov began to exchange glances, while looking reluctant to share his information about the country of Gazzetta.

Majority of the borders of Gazzetta is next to Nonsense*, and most of its land is comprised of rugged mountains. Near the borders of Blue garden, there is a capital-like city, although there is nothing special about this city, it received an impression due to how the city was run by ordinary people. (TLN: hmm baka & champion said this might cause a problem, so their suggested name for that country is nossentes)

Though the imperial capital is located somewhere within the vast mountain ranges where the artless king reigns. Due to the rugged mountains of Gazzetta, it serves as a natural training grounds for warriors, thus a great number of "Artless Warriors" have been brought up there.

"Although, Blue Garden and Nonsense have known the presences of these Artless Warriors, they have always diverted their eyes from them."(Krielov)

He began to speak softly, 'As a matter of fact, while comparing the [Artless] with the divine art users, it seems that they have a better basic body constitution and excellent life force when the scholars were researching on them', spoke Krielov while trying to hide his voice.

These are the contents of the research results and are not released to the general public. It is known only to a cellular of officials and scholars who are part of the national defense. An idea popped up into Yuusuke's mind while he was listening to the story. From his experience, not once but twice, Sun and Aunt Bahana gave off the impression that "they look thin but they have the strength."

"It's a fact, that one could not sense the power of divine arts from the [Artless], it will be difficult even for the wind arts users to find them if they were to erase the signs of their movement."

For a frontal attack, the attack based divine arts user will be advantageous, but there are limits while charging towards a bow user.

The presences of these [Artless Warriors] were known as rumors amongst the soldiers. Such talks of a divine arts free warrior, who had defeated the soldiers, could not be spoken out loudly. As said, of course it must be known that a [normal warrior] level had caused this incident so that it would be advantageous to the people.

"hmm, I wonder, are the [Artless] actually a variant of a warrior class...? Assuming so ~~"(Yuusuke)
"What do you mean by that?" (Violet)

As Violet tilted her head while having a question mark above her head. Yuusuke began to talk about his idea that he have came up with.

- The [Artless] within the domain of Fonclanc will be appointed as cleaners of Sanc Adiet.
- The [Artless] will be responsible for the cleaning of each districts in the city.
- The [Artless] will not be forced to do cleaning.
- The cleaning remuneration will be funded by the palace.

"Cleaners.....so we are going to place [Artless] in the city?"(Violet)
"Hmm, so in the form of a palace hiring, to restraint outlawry."(Krielov)

As of now, the town cleaning is done by a few day laborers every month. By using the wind arts, one can easily blow away the trash, and by using the water arts, one can rinse the stone pavement. However, the

trash are being blown off to the back alleys of the city and the washed cobbled stones aren't really cleaned properly as it is an uneven road.

Although the noble and middle class districts streets looks beautiful, if one were to go around the back ~~(you know what it mean). Due to him running around the city for the past few days, Yuusuke noticed this problem.

"Well, I understand that there will be people from the noble districts who will disapprove of this arrangement if we immediately apply it over there, so we should test it out with the commoner district first." (Yuusuke)

For each of the districts, we will divide it into partitions and have a supervising soldier who will be responsible for the cleaning supervision of that area. Yuusuke will be creating and providing the tools for cleaning. For the payment and compensation, there currently isn't any estimated budget decided for it yet, thus it will be determined through a consultation with the person in charge of accounting.

"....I can see the aim of it, but will we get the results we want?"(Krielov)

There is the question of whether there will be discontent from the [Artless]. In the first place, this isn't a compulsory thing, so the degree of participation expected from the [Artless] might be zero. Against Krielov's concerns, Yuusuke said "First, we need to create an environment to explain how this work to them."

"The captain of the fire god corps Krielov, haven't been walking along the lower streets of the city, lately, right? I do not know whether you know it or not, but you're a pretty famous figure amongst the [Artless]"

The [Artless] who gathers around the outskirts of the city make their livelihood by being hired as luggage boys or instant servants. Being hired as a caretaker for wagons/carriages, their work have been sincerely appreciated for the first time, but the level of recognition is only established in the city residents and merchants consciousness.

A Great example is Isotta, she had been together with the [Artless], whom were staying in the outskirts of Sanc Adiet for a long time while watching the development of the city. Not only that, the kids of the commoner districts have many experiences playing with the [Artless] kids in the area.

After growing up, while there were people who started to discriminate the [Artless], but there were those adults who still hold a relationship as friends with them.

"Those who were born and grew up in the middle class and noble districts would not have went down to the commoner district to play, thus I believe they would not be so understanding."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke who was deep in thoughts, wondering and pointed out, why did the 4 great gods' faith have been convincing and imprinting the difference between the children of "humble birth".

"I do not know much details about this, but from the doctrines of the 4 great gods faith, I wonder does it have anything regarding the interaction with the [Artless]?"(Krielov)
"Hm? Come to think of it, to suddenly come up with that.....do you know something Krielov?"(Yuusuke)
"There is a saying in a passage [Those who do not receive the blessings of the god shalt be exiled from his land]...."

Where is [his land] ? As there wasn't anything else that depicts this, thus the question became just a joke. But due to this saying, they used it as a doctrine for the country as an excuse to exile the [Artless], although the existence of extreme racism isn't found.

"Well that should be okay right? Although this maybe off topic, I know of a cult who believe in the doctrine to kill people."(Krielov)

If a person opposed this on the grounds of using the doctrines of faith, it would become a difficult problem, but due to Yuusuke's optimism, he believed that there wouldn't be a problem. In the everyday life, the existence of [Artless] have already commonly known as an "accustomed living being" due to human nature.

After a few days, a protection ordinance towards the [Artless] was promulgated, as they will become the cleaners of the city.

Shortly before the promulgation of the protection ordinance in Sanc Adiett~~

-Blue Garden's first capital, the summit city of Cofta.-

From the city, one could ascend a little into the mountains where the temple of shalnar is located. Zeshald was reminiscing his past when he stepped into the city of Cofta, remembering that there was little to no change to the city. He was here for an audience with the water priestess queen, Risha, which was scheduled for tomorrow. (TL: Her full name is Rishause)

If he could create a good relationship with the queen, and becoming a confident while he is at it, his position within Blue Garden will greatly increase.

Unlike the [Artless] in Paula, the ones you see in the city of Cofta are wearing neat clothings and shoes. All of them were walking along the streets without their owners, attached to them were the bracelet of slaves, they were all bright and healthy.

They are the slaves the temple owned, the ownerships of the temple are owned by the queen, thus they are under the patronage as the queen’s slaves, thus they live peacefully within the city. Originally the bracelet that they adorn on their body meant the shackles of slaves, but here it became a shield to protect them.

"To have such a huge difference between the reign of the queen and the supreme commander within the same country...."(Zeshald)

Hearing from students whom I was in charge of their divine arts guidance, they had lived for quite some time in Paula and would always go back for homecoming to visit their parents in Cofta, hearing about the situation there, I was quite taken aback. ~Zeshald pov

Like a fish in a tank, Zeshald was being stared at by the inhabitants of the city while he was exploring the city, due to him being Paula's divine arts instructor, he could feel that the atmosphere of impression around him isn't very calming.

"Fuee.... Tomorrow's audience, I must succeed in it."(Zeshald)

The Next Day ~~

-The Ancient temple of Shalnar located in Bouzas Mountain-

Entering through the first floor entrance, he was greeted by a wide and spacious interior hallway, the temple guard's room and guest rooms, in the inner sanctum was the dormitories of the believers.

After passing the guest rooms, there was the kitchen and dining hall, followed by a washing area, well and a long mid hallway where the quarters for the servants and temple soldiers are located. That hallway was lined up with a room on either sides. It is apparently built in such a way so that the temple soldiers could lineup within the hallway.

At the deepest part of the temple was the office and private room of the consul, and a stairs leading up to the 2nd floor, and right before the stairs was another temple soldier's guard room. The second floor is where the bedroom, archives, dining room and audience room of the water priestess queen is located.

Incidentally, on the other side of the wall of the deepest part of the first floor was a cleansing bath for the queen to use and it is directly connected to the second floor.

Zeshald immediately bowed and kneeled down the moment he passed through into the audience room as Queen Risha was sitting aback on the throne.

"Good Morning, you’re beautiful and noble queen Rishause. Thank you for allowing this audience with you, I am blessed by your grace~"(Zeshald)

"Enough with the flattery and formal greetings, Divine Art Instructor Zeshald, what brings you here today?"(Risha)

A dignified voice interrupts Zeshald's speech midway, as she interrupted him asking what did he came to hassle her with. Zeshald was surprised by the image of the Queen he had in mind.
However, due to his many years of experiences, his intuition tells him there is more about Risha than it seems. The image of [acting] floats in his mind.

"As I have joined Blue Garden, I came here to greet your Majesty the queen."(Zeshald)
"O I see. But, it had already been 1 month and 10 days since you have defected to my country."(Risha)

In simple terms, the queen was implying, why the hypocritical since it already have been a long time since his defect, understanding that, her ladies-in-waiting(lady officers) were all laughing at the back.

"That's harsh. However, it was because I was being monitored by many eyes and up until now I didn't have the opportunity to come and greet you."(Zeshald)
"That is not my orders, and what does the opportunity of meeting me have to do with..... these monitoring eyes?"(Risha)

As she stood up and tilts her head, her long water colored hair swings casually as it reaches all the way till her knees. Being an exile from an enemy country it is natural to place watchful eyes around him within the city, but does isn't a reason to not apply an audience with the Queen, it is a question of not doing it and not being able to.

Risha felt that Zeshald wasn't simply here with an intention just for a simple greeting, thus she began inquiring him.

"I wanted to avoid bringing the excellent officers from Supreme Leader Izapnar's Officer halls."(Zeshald)
"....?"(Risha)

"I wanted to meet Her Majesty the queen personally, as.....the original Fonclanc Divine Arts Instructor."(Zeshald)

The mood began to become unstable within the audience room. The Ladies-in-waiting mutually wink at each other to show the gesture of vigilance, as though they were trying to call upon the temple soldiers. Risha halt them and gave a gesture to clear out of the room in order to speak to Zeshald alone.

"So what do you mean by that?"(Risha)
"Your Majesty, you are woven with sorrow by the current state of the country."(Zeshald)

Being dissatisfied without being able to do anything about the policies of Supreme leader Izapnar, due to the fact that the real power is being held by that man. Zeshald pointed out that, although the real lineage and authority is her, being frustrated will lead her nowhere, the only way to rebuke is to become a profane lady with control.

"Hold on, Marsha. .....Certainly, it is as you said, I do not think his policies are the best. But..."(Risha)

Although she isn't in favor of the current way the country is run by Izapnar, but that doesn't mean she is in favor of the system in which fonclanc is currently using, as she clearly stated to him. Risha who had inherited the ideal of her late father, only had the chance to practiced it through her small governing domain of Cofta city.

"However, if the current state affairs were to continue, your grace would eventually also be deprived of the authority to run the city of Cofta."(Zeshald)
"YOU RUDE MAN! YOUR THOUGHTLESS WORDS TOWARDS THE MAJESTY IS UNFORGIVING!"(Masha)

The lady-in-waiting who was being called earlier, Masha, was fuming mad and begins forming a dew like divine arts in her hands. But nothing happened, she winked across towards the lady-in-waiting who had the same face and was standing on the opposite side. However, as sudden as it began it ended.

"Hey, Sasha! Let's blast this rude old man who is an utter fool into oblivion!"(Masha)
"Pointless. Her Majesty said to wait. We should discern what he still have to say."(Sasha)

As she replied to her emotional elder sister Masha, Sasha returned her emotion by simply increasing her divine power output. By the way, Masha's water arts is a defensive type where she uses "Water Wall", while Sasha is a attack type where she uses "Water Column".

Either way, there wasn't much water in the vicinity and thus the effect of the water art will not be devastating, there wasn't a breath of Izapnar in them, as Risha personally appointed them as her reliable ladies-in-waiting, it seems as they were once friends.

"Both of you, Calm Down. Mr. Zeshald what is your purpose of coming here?"(Risha)
"A friendship between both the countries if I must say."(Zeshald)

"..... You want me to attack and betray Izapnar?"(Risha)
"If possible, I would like it to end without a fuss."(Zeshald)

After the question of affirmation from the queen. Risha sighed and shook her head. If only such a thing was possible, as she murmured inside her mind.

First and foremost, if we were to lose the leadership of Izapnar now, the country will fall into chaos. And if that happens, Fonclanc could easily march in with it's army and Blue garden would be utterly destroyed. King Esvosbus is that kind of man.

"I am not trying to hope for the destruction of either Fonclanc or Blue Garden."(Zeshald)
"But, you are trying to destroy that man Izapnar and that will be the resulted situation."(Risha)

"Hohoho with all due respects, Your majesty the queen have underestimated the tremendous support of your authority and your people."(Zeshald)
"I no longer have the power to move the country."(Risha)

[Currently all the military authority have all been seized by Izapnar, no matter how much public support I gain, in the end I am just a figurehead queen.] As her 2 lady-in-waiting begin to worried about her. From the side, you could see how close these 3 people relationship is.

"In order for the queen to move the country, first we would need human talents."(Zeshald)
"What do you mean?"(Risha)

After getting the trust of the queen, Zeshald began to explain his schemes.

21. Zeshald's Request

It's been 4 days since the protection ordinance promulgated, and you could already see some of the spearhead representative soldiers guiding the [Artless] cleaners around to the different places in the commoner district. Although the first day had some difficulty due to the many onlookers, from then on it was smooth sailing as there was less confusion, thus changing the city's landscape to a better scenery.

After finishing the report of today's patrol, Yuusuke arrived back at his room and opened the door.

"Yoz"(Reifold)
"What Yoz!"(Yuusuke)

Why is Reifold in my room, isn't this the palace? Yuusuke was looking at him with a surprised and amazed expression. Up until now his actions have all seem to pointed at him being a spy of Blue Garden, but Yuusuke felt that he was not an enemy, thus closing the door behind him before asking, "What's your purpose today?"

"Ah? Isn't it not good to discover an intruder and not call on the knights?"(Reifold)
"You're standing in front of one though. So, what's your reason for coming here?"(Yuusuke)

Responding to what Yuusuke did, Reifold said something amusing,"So someone have grown up." Next, Reifold took out a letter from nowhere and passed it to him. The sender's name was Zeshald.

"This is?"(Yuusuke)
"As you can see, this is Zeshald's letter to you, buddy."(Reifold)

Although Yuusuke had many questions, he wanted to ask him, first he opened the seal and read the letter.

"By the way the contents of the letter was a request for manufacturing of tools and the news of the current situation."(Reifold)
"Shouldn't that be a secret!"(Yuusuke)

In Zeshald's letter, the current situation of Blue Garden was written down, it also contained information about the rumors that were spreading around about the Hero of Gearhawk. Due to these events, there are some confusion within the military reorganization in Paula, using this opportunity they will strike with different kind of actions.

Zeshald met with the queen as he plans to weaken the Blue Garden leadership of the Supreme Leader Officer Izapnar, in order to do this he has to recruit talented people who are still loyal to the queen into the [Queen's Faction].

In the meantime, he is creating the impression of the Queen being the true monarch of Blue Garden, by promoting the Queen as the symbol of the nation, thus becoming a visible tool of authority.

Zeshald's plan is to return to Paula as the Queen's entourage, along with a tool, created by Yuusuke, advertising it as a sacred treasure bestowed by the Queen. His aim was to target all the bureaucrats with authority who were loyal to the former Blue Garden King, and to expand the influence of the original queen faction, the god militia groups.

As a member of the former king’s bureaucracy faction, Izapnar, in order to avoid criticism, he entrusted the Queen with policy and decision making authority. Up until now, due to the her being suppressed within the central region, the Queen did not really have any power to recruit allies, thus having to no choice but to accept all the petitions unconditionally.

However, by increasing the Queen's faction forces he will cause a decline in Izapnar's political power by pressure. More than authority and decision making, if the Queen is said to be "useless", and if they could not be forced to follow. The worst case, would be that it develops into a civil war, and if by some chance it happens, Fonclanc will side with the Queen's faction.

By building a good relationship with Queen, Fonclanc and Blue Garden will be able to transit into a more peaceful relationship when she obtains absolute power in Blue Garden.

"Hmm....if things were to happened like that, it wouldn't hurt or itch Fonclanc’s side."(Yuusuke)
"Well, it's a fire that's happening on the opposite shore. And we are the one's fanning the flames."(Reifold)

".....huh? "we"....?"(Yuusuke)
"Huh? I thought you had already noticed it. I am a very important double spy, you know."(Reifold)

One could say that his current position in Blue Garden was a spy sent by Blue Garden to Fonclanc, and also a spy by Fonclanc that was sent to Blue Garden. Since, Yuusuke had the vague feeling that it was something along those lines, after hearing him disclose his secret, Yuusuke replied,"Of course."

Seeing that it was a recommendation by Zeshald, Yuusuke let out a sigh as he came to an agreement.

"Alright I understand the situation, I’ll make some kind of fake sacred treasures."(Yuusuke)
"Best Regards, I'll have to head over and report to King Esvosbus. Oh, keep this a secret between us."(Reifold)

"Seeya later," Reifold left his room while waving his hand. Looking at him normally walking away, it was a weird yet a strangely fresh feeling to Yuusuke.

"But that means... Reifold must have learnt about my ability from teacher."(Yuusuke)

In order to counter the supreme influence from the midst of the enemy, one has to build up his/her forces. Yuusuke understood that this is a role that is in fact very dangerous. Holding the position and title of the Queen's entourage, just by hearing about the situation on the other side, he knows that Zeshald would need the best type of protection.

As Zeshald will be diving deep into such a dangerous job, there would be a risk of assassination once the ball starts rolling. Until the Queen's allies have expanded to a sizable force, it would be a lone struggle within the fortress city.

"If it was like this, the only means I could support him with, are by making these false sacred treasures."(Yuusuke)

As this is a very serious responsibility, Yuusuke begin kneading on the concepts of the Sacred Treasures.

~Council Room, HQ, Central Facility, Fortress City Paula~

In the room, Supreme Leader Izapnar was speaking to his right hand man regarding the incident that had happened recently. It was about Head Instructor Zeshald's lone audience with the Queen Risha.

"By any chance, if we were fully caught off guard by their explanation of us plotting an assassination on the queen..."(Izapnar)
"Perhaps, the majesty might even launch an attack force against us."(Izapnar right hand man interrupts)

Unable to determine what's Zeshald's real intention is, Izapnar had to judge and discuss on with his male subordinate about what choices he had.

"Just as I thought, that incident in the fortress was such a huge blow on us, it will take some time to get over it."(Izapnar)
"Although Zeshald's leadership ability is great, it is such a pity he didn't work for us."(Izapnar's right hand man).

Originally, if Zeshald had an audience with Queen Risha on an earlier date, we could have planned an accompanist assassin to go together with him to assassinate Risha and announce the scenario as a conspiracy of Fonclanc, "Zeshald's Secret Mission was to assassinate the Queen".

Although it is a very cliche way of inciting the public anger towards Fonclanc, he himself knew that by doing that, it would increase the momentum towards war, using the queen's death as the fuel for the war, "The War of Vengeance". This would cause the people to fight bravely til the last man standing.

After reducing the number of the Queen's faction left within the country, he gradually reduced the authority which the royal family held. As Zeshald has recently been recruited from Fonclanc, he came looking unprepared to build up the Blue Garden's royal dynasty, as though he stumbled upon this trip.

"Poison seems to have seeped into our midst....the Queen's faction is slowly increasing. At this rate it will directly lead into a civil war"(Izapnar)
"If that was the case, I believe Fonclanc would support the queen's faction."(Izapnar right hand man)

"!.....That son of a b****! So that was his aim."(Izapnar)
"He might have already set his plan in motion, and started recruiting people to his side."(Izapnar right hand man)

The Queen's popularity amongst the citizens was very high. The different elite groups and the central bureaucracy have a faction which follows the status and lineage, while the militia and central figures follows the old king faction. Thus, the bureaucracy was waiting for the Queen to make her move and side with her faction.

"If only we had something at hand to be of use...."(Izapnar)

"Let's put a collar on someone who is a talented person close to Zeshald. The sooner the better."(Izapnar right hand man)

"Alright, I approve of it, go ahead with it."(Izapnar)
"Then, could you prepare the documents for one of the water members of the Water Troupe."(Izapnar right hand man)

After receiving the documents prepared by Izapnar, his subordinate bowed to the supreme commander as he(subordinate) left the office.

"Ng~~"

It's already late into the night. Yuusuke was in his room, sighing. The sacred treasures that were requested by Zeshald, their abilities weren't up to the desired performance yet. The items that he had created up til now the "status" on them were not strong enough for the items to be considered as a "Sacred Treasure", thus it could not protect Zeshald.

If he were to equip the different parts of the available corps clothing that Yuusuke wore, each and every one of them would stack on the enhancements and achieve the desirable result. But ~~

"If it was just clothes, it would lack the impact.....something else, one equipment which could encompass all the effects, something resembling....."(Yuusuke)

As he was speaking to himself, while murmuring and groaning, a knock echoed from his door. ‘Must be Violet coming to beg for a seasoning for her rara fruits again’, thinking that Yuusuke moved his body up from his bed. Because Violet sometimes come in the middle of the night asking to change the taste of candies while bringing tea to enjoy along with it.

~ Come to think of it, it's been awhile since I made those sweet fruits for Sun.~

Although it is possible for Yuusuke to customize the fruits to the desired sweetness, however it is impossible to recreate them without the customization ability, and the fruits that he had stocked up in Zeshald's house should have all been consumed already. Now may not be the time for a trip back to Rufk Village, I should request someone to make a delivery.

"This time I'll write a letter, to her....."(Yuuske)
"Yoz, good evening"(Reifold)

When he opened the door, Reifold was standing there.

"Seems like you're not making any progress"(Reifold)
"Yea, I need some new materials"(Yuusuke)

Reifold could see that Yuusuke have hit his current limit of his customize create ability as there were a number of sacred treasure candidates, scattered all across the table and on the floor. Although the shape and appearance was up to one's discretion, the type of materials used, on the other hand, had a huge difference in the enhancement effects.

Scattered across the room were many failed sacred treasure candidates and many prototype jewel material, although he had the image of the item in mind, he seem to be unable to create it, thus hitting his limit.

"I have to make this a specialized water arts item, and I expected a considerable amount of effects on the item, but i can only do it to a certain extend."(Yuusuke)

If the sacred treasure was stolen, it would become a ridiculously powerful item for our enemies. Therefore, I wanted to avoid several options, and prioritize Zeshald's safety more than anything else. And on top of it all, to embody the authority of the Queen on it.
Lost in his thoughts, Yuusuke was spinning a jeweled bracelet atop his finger, while Reifold started grinning as he took out a package from his pocket.

"Hey Buddy, this is a present entrusted to you by King Esvobus."(Reifold)
"From the king? What the hell is this....it's heavy"(Yuusuke)

As he opened the package, lumps of metallic objects fell out. Silver colored heavy metals. He looked into the customization menu, and realized it was a metallic material very similar to the large sword that Shinha wield. At any rate, this seemed like an ancient treasure that had been stored for a very long time within the vaults of the royal treasury.

"Eh~, with this I should certainly be able to create what I wanted."(Yuusuke)
"Okay, I will come by again tomorrow night."(Reifold)

"Hey, wait a sec, I have a request for you."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke picked up a sacred treasure candidate, a jeweled ring and changed it into the "Ring of wind arts". He passed it to Reifold as a reward for delivering a letter and a bag of rara fruits to the Rufk Village. Reifold was shocked by an unexpected request from Yuusuke and had a unusual surprised look on his face.

That night, on the highway from San Adiet to Rufk Village, a figure of a man running at speeds exceeding that of a normal troop carriage could be seen. Entrusted with a letter while carrying a bag of rara fruits on his back, he was running while ascertaining the effects of the "Ring of Winds Arts" which he had gotten as a reward.

Reifold, who was extremely blessed by the gifts of Wind Arts, could run at a rate in parallel with a normal horse drawn soldier carriage, but with the increased effect of the ring, his speed exceeded his expectations and this was his first time having a sense of fear from running too fast.
Even though he felt like that, he still continued running without sacrificing any speed, wondering how much faster he could go as his curiosity had won over his fears.

~ For a ring that he created in his spare time, the effect is..... outrageous, the existence of Yuusuke is...~

Demonstrating the flexibility of letting his underling lead during chaotic situation. Using his wits to cleanly control the situation within the fortress, thus appealing to his underlings through the depth of his magnanimity. Having built a good relationship with the princess and her entourage, and even having a close friendship with the renowned Volce family's eldest son, who is also a princess fiance candidate...

"So I see, that was what he meant by moving the world....."(Reifold)

On the whole, different from the value of appearance, in the depth of this world's society and methods, there is always a common misunderstanding of that kind.

~The following morning~

Sun woke up and as usual she was about to head towards Aunt Bahana house, right at the entrance of the door was a bag of rara fruits accompanied by a letter. After she read the letter, Sun took up and hugged the bag while being full of smiles.

"Mr. Yuusuke is..... quite an attentive person!"(Sun)

Sun's favorability rating went up.

22. Harvest Festival

“Good evening, Yuusuke.”(Reifold)
“Oh, you came?”(Yuusuke)

As per their agreement the day before, Yuusuke entrusted Reifold with a [sacred treasure of Shalnar]. It was a silver circlet adorned with a lace-like ornament. The item bestowed enchantments befitting its name:
· Water arts amplification effect (buff);
· Physical strength amplification effect (buff);
· Stamina recovery amplification effect (buff);
· Healing effect (buff);
· Poison resistance effect (buff);
· Tranquility (沈静) effect (buff);
· Divine arts resistance amplification effect (buff);
· Physical resistance amplification effect (buff);
· Movement speed amplification effect (buff).

This item allowed it's wearer to be able to fight for nearly twenty four hours per day with the exception of eating and pooping. Although Zeshald had stamina of an old person, with this tiara a few hours nap would be sufficient for him to regain his strength (as in mana). As for the physical strength, with the enchantments he would be fine with using weapons to his utmost abilities.

"I see, you gain these effects as long as you are wearing it."(Reifold)
"It felt as if the effects weren't that strong when I enchanted the rings or bracelets."(Yuusuke)

As the supportive effects were standard for circlet type items in the games, Yuusuke attempted to recreate these items in this world with great success. Yuusuke explained the theory to Reifold leaving the unexplainable parts out.

"This means… that I, myself am not entirely sure whether the effect will apply or not."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke warned Reifold to keep the other trinket near him at all times as he passed him the ring.

"This is also made from the same metal as the circlet, yet you are not sure if it will work?"(Reifold)
"Well it is a bit too exceptional. It is impossible to try it out."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke avoided explaining the nature of the charm-like item in detail. The item that Yuusuke was not sure of was actually one of the top items in games. Yuusuke silently named it [sacrificial charm].

"Then I will certainly take it. Also, I have properly delivered the package and the letter."(Reifold)

As Reifold said that he placed the [sacred treasure] into his bag and left, rushing as fast as he could towards Blue Garden's first capital, Cofta. Having finished the task Yuusuke sighed as he headed back towards his bed. It was currently the sixteenth day of Shalnar's month of wind. Soon the earth calendar would begin.

"Phew, holidays will start soon here, eh? That item should reach teacher at around the time the harvest festival begins."(Yuusuke)

Although the period varied by country, in Fonclanc, the harvest festival was held between the first and third day of Zalnar's month of fire. As Yuusuke was on holiday from the fifteenth of this month until the fifth of the upcoming month, he had borrowed a god corps carriage and was preparing the equipment needed to harness the horse while thinking of what souvenirs he should buy for the villagers.
Since he kept Zeshald's carefree attitude towards the villagers in mind, he didn't think too much of what he should buy for them, but there was no way he could be so carefree when it came to Sun. Yuusuke was deeply concerned with this subject as he thought of what clothes should he buy for the girl.

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–Paula's central command, council room–

Plausha was lost on what to do as she was overlooking the private room that she was allotted in the barrack's section.

["Is this really alright?"](Plausha)

She was thinking about the secret agreement that she had agreed on the other day with Volmes, leader of the fire troupe and confidant of the supreme commander Izapnar. Her orders were to stay close to head instructor Zeshald and report upon his movements. In exchange she would be allowed to join the water troupe as well as provided information about the person who killed her sister.
"– You? You are Plausha kun, right?"(??)
"– Eh? Y-Yes. I'm Plausha."(Plausha)

She was studying at home as the head instructor had traveled to Cofta, when she was suddenly called to central command. Stupefied, Plausha rushed over to the institution where fire troupe leader Volmes had given her this secret mission and provided her with a letter of recommendation for the water troupe.

"To spy on the head instructor… why would you want to do that?"(Plausha)
"Zeshald shi, he might be deceiving us."(Volmes) (TN: 氏 or shi is a honorific that is between san and sama in terms of politeness source: http://www.wa-pedia.com/language/japanese_suffixes.shtml)
"You mean, he's a Fonclanc spy…?"(Plausha)
"Mhm, to be frank, that's what I mean."(Volmes)

Troupe leader Volmes mentioned the head instructor's actions that had raised doubts about him. One of them was the audience with her majesty, queen Rishause, whom Zeshald sought on his own, without informing the central headquarters of Paula.

"Her majesty, did you know that she gives special treatment to the [artless]?"(Volmes)
"Y-yes… I have been in Cofta before."(Plausha)

Equal treatment of the [artless], which was an unimaginable sight here in Paula, was actually a common sight in Cofta. It was a political decision that the queen made on her own discretion as she was the sole ruler on the first capital.

"Her majesty was of an ill mind since long ago."(Volmes)
"Wha…"(Plausha)

Plausha let out a surprised shout as she heard her majesty being treated with such disrespect at the central command. Volmes explained in detail with a pained and sad expression on his face about Cofta's present condition and the queen's mental deprive.

— Since her father's, the late king's, death, her highness has been slowly losing her mind from the sadness. She declared that the equal treatment of the [artless] was [her father's dream], although the late king had did that just for his own entertainment. She had left all the tasks related to the management of the country to her guardian, sir Izapnar, and had confided herself within the temple.

“Have you heard that Zeshald shi has been living in the village of the [artless]?”)(Volmes)
“Yes… I have seen him heal an injury on an artless that was owned by someone else. I have asked him about it at that time.”(Plausha)

“Hmm, these actions might have been done in order to test his plan.”(Volmes) TN: (wrote plan, but the kanji reads 訓練 (training, practice))
“… his plan?”(Plausha)

Zeshald could have interacted with the [artless] as his equals so that he could get her majesties attention by showing his concerns towards them. Volmes explained that he could have been living in an [artless] village for this very reason.

“I fear, that there is no doubt that it was all part of his plan to gain a position from her majesty and throw the country into confusion by using his new gained authority.”(Volmes)
“Ple-please wait! Such serious implications, to me…”(Plausha)
“…regarding your sister. The incident in the fortress was really regrettable.”(Volmes)
“!…?”(Plausha)

Izapnar, suddenly changed the topic from telling her about the confusion that could be created behind the scenes to the matter of her sister, who was recently killed in action. Having made sure to have startled her and seeing her slender, shaking shoulders, Volmes finally used his “bait”.

“The one responsible for it was an elite knight of Fonclanc, hailed as a hero of the Gearhawk, but… he also appears to have a close relationship with Zeshald san.”(Volmes)
“With head instructor…?”(Plausha)
“Your sister was a communication type wind arts user, right? I have heard that she was a valuable member of the wind troupe.”(Volmes)
“…yes.”(Plausha)

Plausha’s was clearly shaken. By doing that, Volmes had given her a reason to spy on Zeshald. Every body of the wind troupe returned by Fonclanc was damaged in some way. By telling her only the part of the truth, Volmes had left the rest of the story for Plausha’s imagination and bore even deeper into her heart.

— In the despicable caste system that Fonclanc used, the wind art users were unreasonably treated to be of lower status compared to other divine arts users and were often looked down upon.

“How a female wind arts user with no offensive capabilities would be treated there… I think you can easily imagine that.”(Volmes)
“…”(Plausha)
“My subordinates are already trailing him, however they can only do it from afar. That’s why I have a lot of expectations from you who are his student.”(Volmes)
“I-I can’t do such…”(Plausha)

Volmes quickly returned to the main topic while Plausha was still thinking about her sister. She was still confused and overcome by various emotions, thus the girl was pushed further into the corner. By doing that he directed her thoughts the way he wanted. [The head instructor of the divine arts had a connection with the hero of Gearhawk. Her sister’s enemy.]

“I…”(Plausha)

— As a member of the water troupe you will be on an equal standing with them. They will probably also attempt to use you.
— It will be sufficient if you would only participate in their meetings and report about them as you get back to your barracks.

Having said that, Volmes presented her with the letter of recommendation for the water troupe and the entrance permit to the central command. Thus now Plausha was inspecting a room in the barracks section of the central command, which was given to every member of the elite troupes.

“This revenge for my sister. I… what should I do?”(Plausha)

Muttering if this is really alright, Plausha closed the door of her private room.

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Shalnar’s month of wind, nineteenth day ~

As the holidays had come, Yuusuke visited the palace god corps waiting room early in the morning. Elite knights from the renowned lineages had gathered in this overly extravagant waiting room thus the atmosphere in the room was more akin to a gentleman lounge.

[“The interior is terrible, but otherwise it is no different from the room downstairs.”](Yuusuke)

Yuusuke, was holding souvenirs for his friends in the Rufk village that he had bought the day before, which looked slightly inappropriate in this setting, but as he was a captain on the famous darkness god corps not one person in the room complained about this.

“Ah, here you are. Heeeey, Hivodir~”(Yuusuke)
“You again… It’s rare enough for you to show your face here, moreover with such an unusual appearance.”(Hivodir)

Looking at Yuusuke who looked like a grandma with oversized grocery bags, Hivodir shook his head while breathing a sigh. As Hivodir was showing his bewilderment, Yuusuke placed a ring between his thumb and index fingers and flinged it towards the fiancé candidate. Thinking what it might be, Hivodir tried to catch it… but got hit by it in the face.

“Bitch! Why did you do it so suddenly? … Wait… can this be?”(Hivodir)
“It’s the fire arts ring that I finished yesterday. Truthfully, I wanted to give them to the commanding officers of every corps before anyone else, but you were begging for it so much that I decided to give it to you first.”(Yuusuke)

Hearing this, commanding officers of each of the corps looked at him with sharp glances. The nearby fire corps commanding officer gave him an exceptionally sharp look.

“Ahahaha~ It seems that I have earnt it. It feels as a result of our deepening friendship!”(Hivodir)

Hivodir brushed off the pressure from these glances as if it did not concern him at all. He proudly put the ring on and left the waiting room to test the effect of the buff in the training grounds. However, inside he was sweating buckets of cold sweat which he somehow managed to cover up with his noble-like attitude.

***

Having descended to the carriage station, Yuusuke met his subordinates at the gate to the city. The entirety of the darkness god corps were on holiday, so they were also on a special leave. It seems that Isotta was also returning home to her family in the [artless] district.

“Good morning, Captain. Are you returning to the village today as well?”(Isotta)
“Should I help you with the loading of your baggage?”(Vermeer)
“Ah, thanks Vermeer. Aisha, are you returning home as well?”(Yuusuke)

Aisha and Shaheed seemed to have plans to spend their vacation at their parent’s homes in the middle class district. Vermeer had nothing planned for his holiday so he planned to slack off in the palace after seeing his squad mates off. Fonke had plans to go on a bar tour and to hang out at the singertown (Machiuta), the so called red lights district. (TN: Prostitutes are called nightsingers in Kaltcio thus the name singertown).

“That’s right, did her highness agree to let you leave?”(Vermeer)
“Violet? Hmh, she was unexpectedly OK with it. I might have even slightly changed my opinion about her…”(Yuusuke)

When Yuusuke told Violet that he had planned to return to Rufk village during his holiday it seemed that the princess had plans to drag him along and go incognito to the harvest festival. However, hearing that he wanted to spend some time with Sun in the village, Violet seemed to understand Yuusuke and replied with a “In that case it can’t be helped.” Violet seemed to have been worried about Sun who was probably as dispirited as her regarding Zeshald’s defection, and Yuusuke apologized to the girl in his mind after seeing this kind side of her’s.
Having settled everything he had to do, Yuusuke set off towards Rufk village that he had left twenty nine days ago.

***

The horse was tirelessly pulling the knight corps carriage as his harness was customized with fatigue restoration effect. When he arrived at the Rufk village, it was slightly past noon. The traveling speed was similar to the time when he traveled to the city with Zeshald.

Yuusuke felt slightly nostalgic as he passed through the log bridge over the protective trench, which was surrounding the village. Yuusuke arrived around the time that villagers took a break from their daily tasks and a familiar face smiled as he saw Yuusuke approaching. As a complementary for Yuusuke’s service at the palace, Rufk village’s treatment improved as well. Villagers received cattle as well as seeds and fertilizers so the fields around of village visibly increased.

Having stopped the wagon near Zeshald’s house, Yuusuke saw Sun’s figure through the opened door. Yuusuke mentioned his return on this day in the letter that he asked Reifold to deliver to the village, so Sun was not surprised to see him. Instead, she greeted him with the humble smile that did not change since Yuusuke left the village, and the black haired youth smiled in turn.
Sun was halfway on her way to the cart, when a man, seemingly a villager that Yuusuke did not know that well, appeared in the doorway.

“Welcome back, Yuusuke san.”(Sun)
“I’m home, Sun.”(Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke got off of the wagon he exchanged the greetings with Sun and asked her, “Who is he?,” about the man that stood behind the girl. According to Sun’s story, he was a childhood friend that was estranged with her up until recently when Yuusuke left.

He seemed to have started visiting Sun often as he became worried that she was feeling lonely after Zeshald left the village, followed by Yuusuke.

“Nice to meet you, I’m Thalys.”(Thalys)
“I’m Yuusuke, nice to meet you too.”(Yuusuke)

They exchanged simple greetings. The man had rather short hair and his height was similar to Yuusuke’s. He seemed to be quite cheerful and gave of a feeling quite similar to that of Fonke. All in all, he seemed to be an ordinary young man.

Afterwards, it became completely dark until they finished bringing all of the Yuusuke’s luggage into the house. Having helped bringing the luggage inside, Thalys bid Sun farewell with a “See you tomorrow,” and left.

“Yuusuke! You’re back?”(Bahana)
“Aunt Bahana, I’m back~!”(Yuusuke)

Bahana spotted Yuusuke, who was leading the horse into the stables just as she was returning from the hunt, and called out to him. *Bam Bam,* she struck his back repeatedly as she said, “It’s good to see you back,” with a cheerful voice. She was as strong as usual even if her build looked to be slender. That made Yuusuke think that the rumor he heard at the palace a few days ago, that “[artless] are born fighters” might actually be true.

“Hmm~? What’s that? After all that ruckus about you becoming a hero you did seem not grow any muscles at all?”(Bahana)
“Uhmmm, well that’s because I haven’t done any physical labor.”(Yuusuke)

“Shouldn’t you train your body as well?,” continuing to avoid Bahana’s passes to grab him by his sides to stroke his flank, Yuusuke took out a bowstring that he bought as a souvenir and gave it to the woman.

***

“I see you are as strong as always, aunt Bahana.”(Yuusuke)
“Hehehe. When I heard that you are returning, I have been eager to make you a welcome home meal. I hope you are excited about it?”(Bahana)

After returning home to catch his breath, Yusuke was relaxing at the sofa. As Sun brought him some tea, he asked the girl about the event that will start in a few days’ time. Sun told him that the harvest festival was an event where everyone in the village prepared food, gathered together outside of their houses, and ate it.

“It looks like the festival will be lively this year.”(Sun)
“I will enjoy it then.”(Yuusuke)

As Sun was sorting through the souvenirs, Yuusuke brought from the city, she noticed a new, high quality dinnerware as well as some cloth. It was a dress most suitable for outdoor use that was of a slightly more

mature style than the simple one-piece she had worn in the palace. It looked like she would also be able to wear it while working in the fields

“Hey… this dress.”(Sun)
“Ah, this one. I didn’t know your tastes so I tried choosing one that I thought would look good on you.”(Yuusuke)
“Thank you very much… I truly appreciate it.”(Sun)
“I-Is that so. I’m glad.”(Yuusuke)

Slightly blushing, Sun smiled and seemed to be grateful from the depths of her heart. Yuusuke nodded, with his face still worried whether the girl liked the present that he bought her.

***

The next day…

As the preparations for the tomorrow’s harvest festival were underway in cities, towns, and villages of every country, people of Rufk village also started their preparations for the event. They created the festival grounds in the central plaza of the village by building a bonfire from the oilwood, putting the highly flammable wood in a structure that resembled a well. Afterwards they proceeded to line up the tables to create a single long table for the food.

Yuusuke also planned to help, but he was told off with a “You finally got your holiday so go and rest,” thus he proceeded to walk around the village looking at the increasing fields and cattle. The real reason, however, was that even if he wanted to help, Yuusuke was completely ignorant of the preparation process, so there was little that he could help with in the first place.

Middle aged married women were busy with the food preparations while younger women and girls were decorating the plaza. As Yuusuke was wandering through the plaza, he spotted Thalys helping Sun with her work. While Yuusuke was lazing around, thinking that they look good together, he was called out by aunt Bahana.

“Looks like you really have nothing to do, Yuusuke.”(Bahana)
“Well, yeah~”(Yuusuke)

Seeing Yuusuke shrug his shoulders, saying that he was not allowed to help, Bahana restlessly looked around and dragged Yuusuke off to a shadow of a building. “What?! What?!,” screamed Yuusuke as he was pushed in his back and led behind the barn. As he murmured something as stupid as “Am I being seduced by a widow,” to Bahana, who pressed herself to his back, and properly earnt a flick onto his forehead.

“Stop speaking like an idiot, it’s about that girl. We have to talk about Sun.”(Bahana)
“Sun?”(Yuusuke)
“After you and Zeshald left the village, Thalys was aiming for her the entire time.”(Bahana)
“Those two, aren’t they childhood friends?”(Yuusuke)

According to Bahana, even if Thalys was Sun’s childhood friend, until now he barely ever paid her any attention. After Zeshald left and Yuusuke got called into governmental service, Sun practically started living by herself. This was the opportunity that he was waiting for.

“If you don’t protect her tightly, she will get taken away.”(Bahana)
“No, it’s not about taking her or not… Getting in between the two people’s romance is a bit…”(Yuusuke)

If Sun looked to be troubled by Thalys, Yuusuke would not hesitate and protect her at the first sign of danger, but so far, even if the two were a bit awkward, there were no signs of trouble between them. Moreover, looking at himself, wasn’t he the problem in the first place, wondered Yuusuke, as he was perplexed by Bahana’s insistence.

Amazed by what he said, Bahana shook her head and insisted that Thalys felt no love towards Sun and only went after her as she was one of the most beautiful girls in the village. Banaha whispered this into Yuusuke’s ear after he asked about why did she knew so much about him.

“Thalys is a douche. He’s the most wayward amongst his friends. He is only seducing her to be able to brag about the number of girls he had taken.”(Bahana)

Apparently, he had also attempted to seduce Bahana. At first, it seemed to be a mischievous and childish prank, but as he saw that seducing her was impossible, he surprisingly attempted to use force. Apparently, Bahana had also responded with force in turn.

[“Isn’t it alright. Aren’t you feeling lonely every night?”](Yuusuke)
[“Nice one. But you sure have the nerve to be saying that.”](Bahana)

Bam
–Gyaaaaa….

“Well, I could’ve broken your teeth, so I tried to hold back.”
“Sc-scaaary~”(Yuusuke)

Having drawn first blood, Bahana pulled Yuusuke back up. Feignedly clearing her throat Bahana said:
“Anyhow, it would be best for you… no keep your eyes on that guy at all times.”

As searching for a lover was a side event of the harvest festival, every youth in the village was exhilarated with the prospects of finding his/her pair. Taking advantage of the mood of the festival, even the pushy methods could be used to procure a pair.

“What you said now has made me somewhat worried. I will do something about it just in case.” (Yuusuke)
“I wanted to hear something more akin to [I will always stay by her side]…”(Bahana)

***

On the afternoon, around the time that lunch would be over, the preparation stage was finally done and the village was temporarily enveloped in silence. As the festival would start after sundown, villagers went to rest and get some sleep to prepare for the night. After separating with Bahana, Yuusuke went back home and started customizing accessories. As Sun returned home he walked out of his room.

“Sun.”(Yuusuke)
“Ah? Yuusuke san, you were at home?”(Sun)

Asked Sun as she tilted her head in doubt. She saw Yuusuke at the village plaza so she was sure that he was taking a stroll around the village. While this calmed Yuusuke down a little, he presented Sun with the

accessory that he had made earlier.
It was a transparent, slightly whitish ring that he created by customizing a shouka.

“Eh, EH? Uhm… this is…?”(Sun)
“Aunt Bahana insisted that Thalys is dangerous so I created a charm to keep you safe in case something happened.”(Yuusuke)

Having heard this, Sun obediently took the ring although she showed a troubled smile in the meantime. She stared at the ring in her hand as well as into Yuusuke’s face. Yuusuke, his back and eyes starting to feel itchy, tilted his head asking, “Something’s wrong?”

“No…. Thank you very much for worrying about me.”(Sun)

Smiled (said while smiling) Sun as she put the white ring onto her finger.

***

Night—-

Festival began when the sun had set and reached its climax when the midsummer moon had risen above the horizon. The light of the burning pyre illuminated the surrounding tables that were filled with fruit wine and various food and everyone enjoyed the festival until the next morning.

Onlookers cheered for the dancers who danced along the cheerful melody of flute and drums. There were some people who were also focused only on drinking or eating. A group of several youths separated themselves from the rest. They were lying on each other laps, whispering something sweet to each other. The festival had this peculiar feeling of disorderly solidarity that reminded a warm wind brushing onto one’s skin.

“Yuusuke san, I have heard of your achievements after you became a knight!”(Village girl A)
“Ehh, all of that was just a fluke…”(Yuusuke)
“Please, tell us a story, Yuusuke san.”(Village girl B)
“That is… I don’t have any pleasant stories to tell…”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke, enjoying the food, got surrounded by village girls whom all began to wage a battle of seduction against him. Usually simple and quiet village girls, drunk on the alcohol and the mood of the harvest festival, became just about bold enough to attempt to seduce themselves a guy.
By the way, they became even more daring during the dance festival, which happened during the month of wind, but this tale would be left for another time.

“Bahana, we’re running out of meat.”(Villager A)
“Hmm, as expected, the meat is good this year. Everyone just can’t get enough of it.”(Bahana)

Asked to get more meat, Bahana winked to Sun and left her seat with “I’ll be gone for a bit.” Having waited for the moment when Bahana’s back disappeared in the sea of the villagers, Thalys appeared at Sun’s side. In the meantime, Yuusuke was still being assaulted by village girls with more of the reinforcements on their way.

“Ple—ase… Someone… He—lp me.”(Yuusuke)
“Haha, he’s insanely popular.”(Thalys)
“Uhm, it seems so.”(Sun)

Thalys looked at Sun’s profile as she smiled at Yuusuke’s struggles. As Sun put the cup of fruit wine at the table and started standing up from her place, Thalys asked her for something:

“Sun, I am on my way to the well to get chilled fruit. Could you help me?”(Thalys)
“Mhm, sure.”(Sun)

As she was being led away by Thalys, she turned back at the plaza once again and, seeing Yuusuke unable to deal with the huge mob that he had lured, she smiled to her companion.

The well was in a place that was slightly separated from the street where the buildings were lined up. As this was a night of the festival, there was sufficient light from the bonfire for them to be able to see their path. Moonlight also began to shine stronger as the night grew late.

Still, if one strayed off the road even a little bit, it became so dark that one could not see his/her way anymore. Several small farming tool sheds lined along the road to the well. Sun was dragged into one of the sheds which was dimly illuminated by the swaying light from a burning oilwood branch, as she was forced down on a bundle of straw.

“Sun…”(Thalys)
“Tha-Thalys calm down! What the heck has gotten into you?!”(Sun)
“You understand, don’t you? Don’t try feigning ignorance that you did not know of why you were coming here for?”(Thalys)
“Yo-you are wrong. I never ever thought of or wanted this!”(Sun)

Thalys got on top of Sun who was struggling on the straw bundle and wrapped his arms around the girl’s back. He was closing his lips to the girl’s hair as if intending to kiss her near her ear. Sun twisted her neck and pushed Thalys in his chest, trying to escape him.

“Guahg…”(Thalys)

It seemed that Thalys, being hit by Sun directly into his solar plexus, suddenly released all the air from his lungs. That made the guy retreat his body back. Having been met with unexpectedly strong opposition, Thalys caught the girl’s arms and pushed them down to pin the girl down.
Thalys was thinking that he would paralyze the girl’s thoughts by stealing her lips away (kissing her). He had closed his face to the girl, but Sun had managed to push back the arms that he was supposedly pinning her down with.

“Uuuuuugh~~~”(Sun)
“Wh-what? How can you…”(Thalys)

Somehow, Sun was rivaling Thalys in physical strength. Their struggle looked to be about even, but Sun seemed to be the stronger one as she was slowly starting to push Thalys back. Thalys raised his body to put all the strength into his upper body to counter Sun’s, seemingly inhuman, strength that was coming out of her slender arms. That instant…

“!!”(Sun)
“Fughg!”(Thalys)

Becoming careless, Thalys left his crotch unprotected and, having received a fatal blow to his precious jewels, passed out with foam coming out of his mouth. The ring that Yuusuke gave to Sun was [the Ring of Strength], an item that dramatically increased its wearer’s strength. Having fixed her slightly disarranged clothes, Sun ran out of the shed and explained the circumstances to the guys in the main plaza who were responsible with keeping order during the festival.

“Again, THAT IDIOT!!!…”(Angry old man A)
“Don’t worry Sun chan~. We will show that guy!”(Angry old man B)

Telling Sun that she should breathe in some evening air, the old men had rolled up their sleeves and ran towards the tool shed. Seeing them off, Sun sat on the bench at the village plaza while taking deep breaths. Afterwards, she gently stroked the ring that Yuusuke gave her as a charm.

“… Yuusuke, you dummy…”(Sun)

Whispered Sun silently to the ring, as if kissing it.

***

First day of Zalnar’s month of fire. The festivities for the harvest festival had begun as the moon reached its equinox. Queen Rishause made an important announcement to all the citizens of the Blue Garden.

Head divine arts instructor Zeshald has been appointed her personal entourage. He will henceforth show his loyalty to the queen through his actions at Paula —

This announcement at the beginning of the harvest festival split the reaction of the citizens into two big groups.

23. Water Mirror

Zeshald returned to Paula after receiving the circlet created by Yuusuke. The circlet was said to be a sacred treasure that was bestowed by her majesty queen Rishause. The queen had also made a major announcement at the opening speech during of the harvest festival. Using the combined turmoil of these two events, Zeshald announced the establishment of the [Water Mirror], an organization that was under the queen’s direct control.

As the supreme commander Izapnar had mostly foreseen this, he called a meeting of the royalists of the former king and advocated to restrain the forming of [Water Mirror] and avoid putting the country through the Fonclanc’s conspiracy.

Still, the former royalists disliked Izapnar’s current policies and his view towards the queen so they ignored his warnings. One by one they announced their wishes to become the members of the [Water Mirror] and were welcomed into the upper echelons of the organization. Even if they weren’t part of the commanding executives of Paula, they had prior experience of running the country during the former king’s reign.

Using their experience and skills from their time on active duty, they had started the [Water Mirror] in no time and turned it into a functioning group. At the same time, as there were a lot of supporters of the queen within the active duty soldiers, many hopeful applications were coming in every day.

Although the members of the elite groups, mostly loyal to Izapnar, skeptically viewed the [Water Mirror], some of them, who were loyal to the former king, saw some meaning in the queen's faction and showed some interest towards its activity.

By the second day of the harvest festival, members and executives of the [Water Mirror] had expanded to one fourth of the general population and the elites of the Blue Garden. And it could be felt that this expansion would further increase after the end of the harvest festival.

"Almost all of the royalist members have been confirmed. There are also signs of some members of the elite groups being swayed towards them."(Volmes)

"Khe… I have expected this, but their influence is becoming bothersome. Where are they planning to create their base of operations?"(Izapnar)

"I'm afraid they seem to be using the empty rooms in a section of the main fortress. They are based in the upper levels. While their defenses are not hard to attack, they are also easy to defend…"(Volmes)

"They are not hard to attack, but spying on them is meaningless, eh?. At any rate the assassination of the queen is now out of the question."(Izapnar)

If the queen would be assassinated now, it would be obvious that the culprit would be the Izapnar's faction. Zeshald's assassination was difficult for the exact same reason, but in this case it could somehow be disguised as an internal strife.

Presently they had to undertake urgent measures to stop the expansion of the [Water Mirror]. Using the festive mood of the harvest festival this organization could gain sufficient power to undertake political actions and increase the influence of the queen. In the worst case scenario there was a possibility of them using the queen's influence to dismiss the supreme commander from his post.

Although it was regretful, Izapnar could not publicly denounce Zeshald's actions to be a plot of Fonclanc.

Although he successfully started rumors that queen's treatment of [artless] in Cofta was like that because [of her wounded heart], he had no leads pointing to Zeshald being a spy of Fonclanc.

Zeshald arrived to Blue Garden after receiving a personal invitation. If he blamed that such a person gained the queen's trust, was directly appointed as her personal aide, and yet was a spy of an enemy country, it would also destroy their own reputation as that would also mean that Paula's central command was also deceived by Fonclanc. They were also in no place to make a protest so, in the end, they would have to deal with the [Water Mirror] as an internal problem.

"There are also reports of Fonclanc movements within their side of the national border."(Volmes)

"Esvobus, that sly rat, order the troops to strengthen the security at the border."(Izapnar)

In this critical moment, Izapnar struggled to deal with the government's affairs trying to preserve the foundations of the Blue Garden dynasty that he had laid during the long years.

***

Third day of the harvest festival, morning. Fonke, performing the duties of a messenger, arrived on a fast horse carrying a message that an emergency meeting was being called and Yuusuke was hurriedly preparing for his departure.

As this was the third day of the festival, a lot of villagers gathered to bid him farewell. Having said that, everyone hesitated to talk. Yuusuke, clad in the uniform of the darkness god corps, returning back to the appointment in the city with a palace knight as his subordinate, it has finally started to sink in for everyone that he really is the man from the gossips, the elite of the palace, the hero of Gearhawk.

“Y-you somehow look like an entirely different person.”(Bahana)

Muttered Bahana in an unusually nervous voice. Sun stepped out of the crowd, approached Yuusuke, and softly grabbed his hand before withdrawing her’s after a moment, just like that time in the carriage on their trip back from the palace. That made Bahana’s eyes go wide from astonishment, as she could only gasp, “Oh my!”

“Good bye Yuusuke san. Take care of yourself.”(Sun)

“Ah, I’m off, goodbye Sun.”(Yuusuke)

To Yuusuke, this seemed like some sort of good luck charm from Sun, so he received the act naturally. Bahana helplessly hung her head regarding Sun’s innocence as Yuusuke waved goodbye to the villagers and boarded the carriage.

***

On the way back to the city, Fonke was responsible for using the wind arts to speed up the journey, thus as simple as the carriage the one they rode in seemed to be, it was able to travel at high speeds. Furthermore, the carriage had its drivability customized so it was able to go at the speeds beyond the usual “high speed” that the wind arts allowed them to.

“I say, isn’t the carriage running too fast?”(Fonke)

“I did some reinforcement to the frame, so its fine.”(Yuusuke)

After arriving at Sanc Adiet ahead of their schedule, the travelers passed two district gates and arrived at the Volance palace. Along the way, they passed several different divine knights corps carriages. Upon arriving at the parking section of the palace, they saw a number of corps groups that took turn in boarding the carriages and leaving the palace.

“Yuusuke!”(Violet)

Violet, smiling broadly, ran up to Yuusuke and jumped at him and the black haired boy had caught her by pure reflex. While this action caused an uproar amongst the bystanders, Violet continued embracing Yusuke and cried out about Zeshald.

“The grandpa did it! I knew that he was on our side!”(Violet)

Violet was beyond herself because of the recent change of status in Blue Garden. Zeshald’s purpose of going there was to create this situation, which meant that he did not betray Fonclanc.

As Yuusuke was not really surprised by that, Violet cheerfully asked him, “Did you already know about it?”

“Princess, please calm down a little bit. …Sir Yuusuke, this time it is an emergency situation, but–“(Krielov)

Having made a short pause, Krielov seemed to intend to brief Yuusuke in on the situation. As it was very urgent, he even seemed to postpone the rearing (education) of the princess. Yuusuke listened carefully for the briefing with the princess hanging slantwise on him.

This time, an organization under the direct control of the queen of Blue Garden started rapidly gaining influence in Paula and a huge coup movement is anticipated in the neighboring country. In response of this situation, a decision for emergency deployment of troops near the Fonclanc-Blue Garden border was announced.

According to these orders, a new fortress was to be urgently constructed at a site slightly away from the ruins of the Gearhawk fortress, and knight corps are to be stationed there. Their orders are to monitor the movements inside Blue Garden and, in case of emergency, respond with utmost haste.

“The advance party has already arrived at the construction site and secured the perimeter. Some time ago, a huge material caravan has departed along with the construction personnel. The first combat detachment along with the military personnel is currently departing as we speak.”(Krielov)

“Your orders are to depart with the corps tomorrow and, after arriving at the site, proceed to help with the construction of the fortress and the necessary facilities.”(Krielov)

“Understood. We are to leave tomorrow and head towards the construction site of the new fortress.”(Yuusuke)

As this was the second time that darkness god corps were ordered to help with the construction of the fortress, Yuusuke headed towards his room to quickly review the model data of the Gearhawk fortress in preparation for tomorrow. Fonke tactfully pointed at Violet, still hanging on Yuusuke’s figure and asked, “Are you alright with this?”

“Princess!”(Krielov)

“Wahaha~”(Violet)

After some time, wrinkles at Krielov’s forehead had yet another chance to become deeper.

***

Paula central command. Congress hall.~

Plausha was walking towards her personal room through the corridor of the lodging section which acted as the barracks for the members of the elite groups. As she was given a room in the elite quarters, it took her an entire day to move her clothes and other belonging from her previous room. When she finally finished moving, the uniform that the other members of her group were wearing had arrived as well.

Afterwards, she proceeded to the headquarters of the [Water Mirror] to apply to become a member there. This was her first step of the secret mission that she was given… but she didn’t feel like she was doing anything at all.

“Haaaah….”(Plausha)

She sighed involuntarily. It looked like the [Water Mirror] was steadily increasing in members in between both the elite soldiers and the common folk. She wanted to get in contact with head instructor Zeshald as soon as possible after joining the organization, but such an important decision was not her's to make.

[I will go there tomorrow. It is already late today, so I will surely go there tomorrow,] while worrying whether she should delay her action, she noticed a group of four red haired youths, clad in fire troupe uniforms, and she retreated towards the wall. The four also changed their direction and approached Plausha.

Feeling like she's in a marriage interview, Plausha slowly raised her face. Before she noticed, she got surrounded by the members of the water mirror.

"What's this? Even though she is wearing the troupe's uniform, she's still a brat."(Redhead A)

"An unfamiliar face… has this kid joined the water troupe?"(Redhead B)

"Eh… uhm…"(Plausha)

"Hey, are you really allowed to be here? Show us your permit!"(Redhead A)

Somehow mistaken for a suspicious person, Plausha tried to take out the facility's entry permit, but she remembered that she left it somewhere in her room as she did not have to use it since she had shown the first time she had entered the facility. Instead she showed them a tentative water troupe member card.

"Temporary member, is it. In whose name, the leader of the water troupe?"(Redhead A)

"N..no. I was recommended by captain Volmes…"(Plausha)

As Plausha mentioned the name of the captain of the fire troupe, the guys exchanged glances, wondering [Why would their captain of all things recommend someone to be a tentative member of the water troupe?] They became even more suspicious of Plausha as there was no reason nor pretext for why would someone put a person who even had not reached the enlistment age into another corps.

"It-It's true. Please check with Mr… Captain Volmes! He will confirm it to you!"(Plausha)

"The captain is currently busy. Tell us the reason of why you were given the enrollment permit."(Redhead C)

"That I… I mean… I have special orders…"(Plausha)

It was impossible for Plausha to disclose her secret mission so she started beating around the bush by only replying, "It's related to my mission." The four exchanged looks after hearing this reply and as they started to understand what was happening here, the tension dropped down.

"Oooh, so that's how it is."(Redhead A)

"A mission by our captain eh…"(Readhead D)

However, the atmosphere that was supposed to be easing was actually turning into another, improper direction.

"Well, she is pretty nice for a woman."(Redhead C)

“Well, it’s clear that our captain is not gay.”(Readhead A)

“…?”(Plausha)

Plausha stared blankly at them, thinking [“What are they talking about?”] when one of them suddenly grabbed her from behind, causing the girl to panic. One of the remaining three guys approached Plausha from the front and put his hand under her skirt.

Plausha was of course scared and tried to resist, but the remaining two guys held her hands down so she could not move at all.

“Wha-what are doing! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!”(Plausha)

“Truth is, we are also on a special mission.”(Readhead A)

“We also want to enjoy a little street singer who found her way here.”(Redhead D)

“NOO! Let me go! LET ME GO YOU BASTARDS!”(Plausha)

The man in front of Plausha inserted his finger into her private parts as she was twisting her body in a hopeless attempt to escape and whispered a threat into her ear.

“Go on try screaming once more and I will cook you down there.”(Redhead B)

“?!!”(Plausha)

Plausha stiffened, her entire body shaking while she even forgot how to breathe. [“So she finally became obedient?,”] thought the four fire troupe dickheads as they started dragging her off to the nearest room.

As Plausha was in a panic, not knowing how to act in this state, the things that she had heard about the elite troupes from her sister were swirling in her head. Her sister mentioned that there were some of these kinds of guys in the troupes, but the elite groups enforced discipline so they had acted gentlemanly– (TN: nice way to think of after one of them just casually fingered you, girl)

[“Why? Why did such things had … at the central command… Sister…!”](Plausha)

As Plausha was praying to her sister, a familiar voice resounded in the hallway.

“You, what the hell are you doing?!”(Volmes)

It was none other than Volmes, confidant of the supreme commander Izapnar, who was walking towards Plausha with a stern look on his face, the clanking sound of his boots resounding in the hallway. Plausha looked at him, pleading for the help, but her voice was still paralyzed from the fear of the finger.

The four exchanged perplexed glances after the entrance of their commander, but soon the relaxed their shoulders and confronted the commander in a light manner.

“Nothing, just training for a special mission.”(Redhead A)

“This cute junior asked us to help in her training.”(Redhead B)

They said this with a wide grin on their faces as they raised up Plausha’s uniform skirt. Plausha’s face blazed red. The next second the cheek of the man that raised her skirt became red along with a dull sound.

Slapping each of his subordinates in succession, Volmes protected Plausha behind his back as he calmly spoke with a disgruntled expression.

“You seem to have misunderstood something. She is a… relative of a wind troupe member who was killed at the Gearhawk. She is her younger sister.”(Volmes)

“!!”(Readheads)

“We—we are deeply sorry for our actions…”(Redheads)

The four were visibly disturbed, having learnt of Plausha’s circumstances. The four, now visibly depressed, were ordered to reflect on their actions while Volmes escorted Plausha back to her room.

“I am sorry, it happened due to my lack of supervision. I promise you that this will never happen again.”(Volmes)

“N-it’s nothing.”(Plausha)

After apologizing to Plausha, Volmes talked to her about the circumstances of those guys for a little while. They too have lost their close friends all at once. They had not been able to mourn their friends due to all the bustle with military reorganization. When the bustle had seemed to settle down, the [Water Mirror] incident happened and the situation got worse as the turmoil spread again. Plausha was able to relate with this situation as she had seen the unrest in the city.

“I am sorry for requesting the impossible from you…”(Volmes)

“I.. I will do my best!”(Plausha)

As Volmes said that [Water Mirror’s] influence was approaching threatening strength, Plausha hardened her resolve to complete her mission. She would carry out her mission to search for [Water Mirror] from tomorrow.

“Take a rest today.”(Volmes)

After saying that Volmes left Plausha’s room.

***

As various recreational facilities were installed below the lodgings, barracks also had recreational facilities and bar built in the underground section. After leaving Plausha’s room, Volmes headed towards the resting room. The four guys from before were drinking there.

“Captain, did you really have to hit us so seriously there?”(Redhead A)

“It looked more convincing that way.”(Volmes)

“Did we really had to go so far with that act?”(Redhead B)

“You had to precisely because it was an act. The bait had to look real in order to get the most out of it.”(Volmes)

Volmes replied to a playful complaint of one of the guys and flattered him, “The act looked to be pretty real.” His subordinates also laughed, remembering Plausha’s face.

(TN) there was no paragraph separator here so I assume that the same discussion with the 4 guys is continuing. In manga it was a short dialogue between Volmes and Izapnar)

“Now I expect that girl to start carrying out her mission. If she manages to lure him out into our territory, we can let a specialist handle the rest.”(Volmes)

“So, you already have someone in mind?”(Redhead A)

“I plan to use Belushya from the water troupe.”(Volmes)

“Oh that ice woman?”(Redhead A)

Water troupe, similar to water god corps, was a group focused on healing type divine arts, however if it had to be said, they were more of a militia than a support group.

The members of the elite group were split almost evenly between the support types and the offence types. Belushya was a top class divine arts user of this elite group. Drinking a glass of alcohol that was offered to him, Volmes turned to leave to proceed with his other tasks.

“Don’t forget to keep up your act. If you meet her you have to look depressed.”(Volmes)

“Yeaaah, yeah.(Redheads)

Volmes left the resting room, listening to their halfhearted reply.

24. Deernook Fortress

As the harvest festival came to an end, Zeshald was thoroughly basking in attention that the sacred treasure that was supposedly bestowed by the queen has drawn to him.
Since the announcement about the formation of the [Water Mirror] on the first day of Zalnar’s month of fire, Zeshald has been working almost without breaks. Because of their position, some members of elite troupes secretly came to visit him under the shroud of night to express their interest to become a member. Thus, he had to handle the visitors regardless of if it was day or night.

Still, the divine arts aura that Zeshald had around him emitted the power of the sacred treasure. The artifact also calmed him down as well as sped up the body recovery processes thus Zeshald felt part of the power of the item with his own body.

Although, these effects were beyond what Zeshald had expected of the artifact, the old man used them as part of his propaganda which, little by little, spread between the members of the [Water Mirror] and the common folk alike. This envy and awe was a good tool to boost the queen’s influence.

“Hmm, so the construction of the Deernook fortress had started anew.”(Zeshald)
“It seems that Yuusuke-kun is also on the move.”(Reifold)
“Is that so…We have created quite an organization on this side. Izapnar’s faction looks to be slowly preparing for something.”(Zeshald)
“They are acting faster than I anticipated. It has to be due to the effect of the festival…”(Reifold)

Reifold, bearing the latest reports from Fonclanc has received Zeshald's report and headed towards the Shalnar temple where queen Rishause was residing.
By communicating between former royalists and working as a messenger for the queen, Reifold was also actively contributing to the queen's faction's rise to power.

"Hmm, it looks like it is going to rain tomorrow," whispered Zeshald, looking out through the window, towards the direction of Fonclanc.

***

~Sanc Adiet, Volance palace~

In the parking area on the first floor of the palace, knight's corps carriages were lined up and ready for departure. Near the line of these carriages stood two men, one wearing a black palace knight's uniform, another wearing a red one.
These men were the commander of the darkness corps, Yuusuke, and a member of the fire corps, Hivodir. This time around, as a special case, Hivodir was given the position of a squad commander. Although the actual reason for his selection was of course related to his position as princess's Violet's fiancé candidate.

Should Yuusuke obtain yet another achievement this time around, he would be able to rise to a social position that would allow him to stand beside the princess as a fiancé candidate. Wary of this, the fiancé candidates raised their voices of concern during one of their meetings, calling out for one of them to also participate in this mission. Sadly, there were no volunteers.

Although the palace knights were powerful divine arts users and held the social position of the elites, the truth was that, aside from the mock combat drills, they had no real fighting experience.
As the place that they would be dispatched was near the country border and would likely become the front of the battle, it was not strange for them to be hesitant. As the heavy silence descended on the meeting room, Hivodir volunteered, saying "In that case, would you let me go?"

"I didn't expect you to actually tag along with us."(Yuusuke)
"Hnhnn, I am also her highness's fiancé candidate. I thought I should get myself distinguished in service."
"I hope that nothing will actually happen."(Yuusuke)
"Hahaha. It would be nice if there were just enough enemies to earn my achievement. I don't care about anything else after that."(Hivodir)

After exchanging this cheerful conversation, the two guys boarded their respective carriages. The darkness god corps left the parking area first, accompanied by the knights that were put under Yuusuke's command for the duration of this mission. In total Yuusuke's group was comprised of twenty people. Hivodir's group, comprised of thirty members as it was accompanied by servants and other personnel, left the parking area after Yuusuke.
Ten carriages, traveling separately towards the Deernook fortress, were seen off by a lot of people as they were leaving the city later than the garrison forces.

***

A wind user scout detachment of Blue Garden, stationed near the country border at the side of the highway to Paula reported that Fonclanc is amassing troops near the state border and constructing some kind of fortification. A large amount of raw material was also seen to have been moved in. After making their

report, the scouts were observing the site since a few days ago.
As this information was provided by the scouts in the enemy territory, it seemed that a plan to construct of a new fortress with a garrison of soldiers was underway.

“Another new group has arrived, right?”(Scout)
“Ah, are those guys seriously thinking about an invasion!”(Scout leader)

Commanding officer was inspecting the mass of Fonclanc troops through a telescope. He unintentionally raised his voice towards his subordinate as he was surveying the newly arrived troops who were getting off their carriages.

“That guy! That black guy, isn’t that the darkness corps?” (Scout leader)
“That guy is the hero of Gearhawk?!”(Scout)

His subordinate, who was near his captain, confirmed Yuusuke through a similar telescope. Since they were sure that they have not made a mistake, they called for the communications officer to relay this information to Paula headquarters. As the fire god corps members, the royal guards of Fonclanc, were also present, something big was obviously happening there.

“There are rumors that this guy has a special divine art that allows him to build a huge tower out over one day.”(Scout Leader)
“I have heard a number of rumors about that myself. Some of them mentioned a monstrous power that raised a tower in a blink of an eye.”(Scout)

The rumors of Yuusuke’s tower had also reached the Blue Garden, although the “raised instantly” part was treated as an exaggeration or a figure of speech. It was thought to describe a composition of a new construction skill and a special type of divine art to perform rapid construction.

While his subordinate was talking to the communications officer, the scout leader was continuing to monitor the Fonclanc encampment to which the hero of Gearhawk had just arrived. He stared in disbelief as the tents were suddenly folded one by one.
[“Are they relocating? They can’t be marching forward like this, can they?,”] thought the scout leader, as he wondered if the arrival of the hero was a trigger for something.

“What?!”(Scout leader)
“Are there any new movements, sir?”(Scout)

Telling the communications officer to wait, the scout used his telescope, which was installed near his leader, and tilted his head in a similar way. All of the tents have been removed and the area was vacated. A person, clad in black clothes, stood alone in the field, his hands stretched forward as the ground started to shine, enveloped by a mysterious phenomenon.

“What the hell are they doing there?”(Scout)
“I don’t know…”(Scout leader)

The communications officer crouched behind the two whispering scouts as he narrowed his eyes to be able to see the shadows of the people in the distance.

***

“Good, I like how the basement part feels now.”(Yuusuke)
“Are you going to build the fortress on top of this? I have no idea how your divine arts work at all.”(Hivodir?)
“Leave me alone!”(Yuusuke)
“By the way, have you created some proper commander quarters?”(Hivodir?)

Yuusuke firstly created the passages and rooms for the basement that would serve as the foundation of the fortress. Soldiers were awed by the sight as they stared into the vast underground portion of the fortress, appearing before them. Those that have seen the construction of the observation tower in the plaza trembled, waiting for the construction of the actual fortress.

“Okay, I am going to put the upper part. Just in case, everyone please stand back.”(Yuusuke)

By referencing the design of the Gearhawk fortress in the map item data window of his customization menu Yuusuke performed the final checks in the menu for the construction of the Deernook fortress.

“Execute!”(Yuusuke)

Above the fortress foundation a huge wall stretched into the sky, enveloped by light effects. Simultaneously, the raw materials in the area got enveloped by the same light, and disappeared. Before long the light effects vanished and a huge fortress stood before the army in all its glory.
The hundred and twenty knights and service personnel who were sent to be stationed at the Deernook fortress cheered loudly, witnessing the appearance of their new “home”.

***

“What the heck?!”(Scout leader)

The scout leader shouted that as he stood up by pure reflex after witnessing such a sight. Forget about the telescope, he could confirm it with naked eye, the fortress was clearly there.

“So… it was not… just a rumor?”(Scout leader)
“Le-leader! Please look at that, more buildings have appeared.”(Scout)

They were able to see the front right corner of the fortress from their vantage point. Just like how the fortress appeared, many walls of light sprang up in succession around the fortress. Some of them seemed to have become stables, while the others turned into some other sort of facilities.
Finally a stone lookout tower rose above the fortress and the entire area was enveloped with a defensive ditch, and with that the mysterious phenomenon has ended. The Fonclanc knights, who were in within the premises have once again sprung back to work.

“Th-they managed to build one huge fortress…”(Scout)
“Give me a break…”(Scout leader)

The scout leader started sweating he became aware that he was standing in the open, defenseless, and hurriedly hid himself in between a rock formation. However he was still feeling uneasy as if the fortress itself stared through the rocks right at him. He would have surely felt reassured if such a fortress had belonged to his allies.
The fortress that could only be built over six to twelve months at the fastest pace, was raised in an instant. But, since it was built on the enemy side, there was nothing to be exhilarated about.

“Inform the headquarters of this immediately. We will be continuing our surveillance over here.”(Scout leader)
“Roger!”(Comm Officer)
“Oh, looks like a drawbridge has just appeared.”(Scout)

Leaving the relay of the intel to the communications officer, the two scouts have resumed their surveillance duty. The sky that was clear until yesterday has begun to darken with gray rainclouds which were starting to conquer the blue expanse.

***

Having built the fortress and its facilities, Yuusuke was slacking outside while the preparation of the fortress interior was underway. After leading the horses into the stables and parking the carriages in the sheds, Hivodir, for some reason, climbed up the watchtower and was overlooking their surroundings. The tower had no other purpose other than observation.
Members of the darkness god corps began gathering around Yuusuke. Since Hivodir has been around Yuusuke for a while, they seemed to have trouble approaching their captain.

“Thank you very much, captain.”(Vermeer)
“I haven’t seen captain’s power’s for some time. They are too strong after all.”(Shaheed)
“Truly, no matter how you look at it.”(Fonke)
“It is truly great that you are our ally, captain.”(Aisha)

Everyone gave Yuusuke their thanks. As Yuusuke was embarrassed from all the flattery Isotta suddenly gasped as she had noticed something, and a troubled expression has appeared on her face.

“Hmm, what happened, Isotta?”(Yuusuke)
“Ah… No it’s just that… since some time ago someone has been continuously spying on us.”(Isotta)
“It’s those Blue Garden scum. They probably have a surveillance post nearby.”(Fonke?)

Isotta felt the presence of the enemy, which was not a surprise, given the proximity to the state border, thus there was no tension in Fonke’s reply. Isotta was only surprised that the feeling she felt was not the usual wind arts surveillance but the feeling that [someone was watching her].

“Hmm…”(Yuusuke)
“Even if that is true, I think we are safe inside of the fortress.”(Vermeer)
“If you like it, you can share a room with the captain.”(Fonke)
“Eh? Th-this kind of thing!…It-it’s rude… Y-you c-can’t do that!”(Isotta)

Isotta stuttered, startled by Fonke’s teasing, while Yuusuke was inspecting his surroundings, thinking about whether he could create some additional useful improvements.

25. White Shadow

"Neri! Neri!"

The construction of the great wall was rushed and because of that, a part of the foundation which was not yet reinforced had collapsed during the rain. Thus, there were several innocent people who got involved in the accident.

~ Plau! Is that you?

"Sis, Neri is! Neri is!"

On the actual scene of the incident, workers of the construction project and injured people who were trapped under the collapsed wall were all currently being rescued. Fortunately there weren't any dead yet.

~~ Dammed it's useless, this is impossible unless one is skilled in water arts.

"Why didn't you save Neri? Quickly, get a water Doctor here."

~ To call a doctor for an [Artless] pet, it's something which bends the rules.

"Neri is family person! Family's friend person!"

~~Plau.....we have no choice, Neri is an [Artless]
~~It would be better to let him rest sooner.
~~Missy is such a poor thing, it can't be helped as she is a [Artless]
~~Plau is a good kid right? So please bid farewell to Neri here, alright?

"Neri....."

As the rain poured down and battered on the walls, an [Artless] was trapped under the rubbles of the accident. The blood of the person who she had spent all her time with, Neri's blood could be seen, as though her life was flowing away together along with the blood, the young girl was lost at what she could do and was just staring while crying.

".....Ng"

Within the walls, inside a room of the fortress, the sound of the rain battering the cobblestone could be faintly heard. Listlessly lying down and getting up, a sorrowful dream a memory that she had embraced. Plausha awoke from her bed with a single stretch.

"Today, I have to go over to where the Head Instructor is ....."

After washing up, she put on her water troupe uniform while biting a piece of bun and dried fruit in her mouth. She then left her room within the barracks compartment.

Near the borders of Fonclanc and Blue Garden, it's been the 4th day since the appearance of Deernook Fortress. The heavy rain from the previous day had caused the dried earth of Kaltcio to moisten. This was a blessing to Paula, who is currently experiencing a severe water shortage.

The rain continued pouring on for 3 days, and yet again, the wind arts corps are monitoring the shadows that are on the walls of the fortress as it was their scouting mission. Due to the massive appearance of Deernook Fortress, the soldiers who had nothing to do had gathered together in the recreational area where Yuusuke had made a game to pass the time.

The outside of the turntable was red, green, yellow, green, black, white mass. The idea was to let the ball go into ditches in the surrounding area.The ball would be dropped on the spinning round turntable, and the ball would roll downwards due to it's mass and momentum. Numbers of magnification is written on the side of the table, and the player has to choose the expected color in which the ball will drop in the ditches by placing their bets. The name of the game is [Kaltcio.Roulette]

"Yesss! Double Red came!"
"Ahhh~~~~~~~ just one more and ~~~!"

Unlike the usual gambling bills that they played, this was a higher form of gambling. It became a very popular game as the soldiers were currently starving of entertainment.

"After I created the Pachinko, everyone got confusedly hooked onto it....I didn't knew it would turn out like this."(Yuusuke)
"Captain, is this okay? This...."(Aisha)

Aisha who unreservedly questioned about the current gambling game as she raised her eyebrows wryly. Yuusuke replied with "It should be okay unless they take it too far", while preaching the need for a relief. Incidentally, the highest in command within this fortress is Yuusuke who is the captain of the Royal Knights, while the 2nd in command is Hivodir, the team commander for the god corps.

And that 2nd in command is currently standing in front of the roulette table. He was standing there, promising a treat to his underlings while borrowing gambling bills from them, though most likely he wouldn't keep his promise.

"So close! Let's start the next round, I'll win everything back."(Reifold)
"Commander, that's the 3rd round already right?"

And that’s how Deernook Fortress/became a gambling den.

Within the fortress of Paula, an empty room that was lined up with the great wall was renovated into the [Water Mirror HQ]. Zeshald, with the organization, was currently endeavoring to slowly integrate the system of Cofta, which the reigning Queen used, into the activities of Paula.

He started by overturning the plain and simple daily common sense of Paula. In order to confirm whether there was any visible changes, he made use of the [Artless] activities. In the alleys of Paula, where large gatherings of [Artless] hung out, most of them had been converted into the Queen's property and were wearing bracelets marking them as slaves.

Those who are the Queen's property were dressed neatly and proper meals were given to them. They are also not allowed to cause unneeded violence.

In terms of sex, one should not force another without the consent of the other. A compulsory medical examination must be conducted accurately by the use of water arts, and most importantly, [Artless] should all be treated equally as though they are dealing with a normal person.

Although at the beginning there seemed to be confusion from both sides, the assignment became much smoother after an elderly who came from Cofta stepped up..

"It'll soon be noon, Plausha will you go out for lunch too?"(Zeshald)
"Ah, yes"(Plausha)

Within the Water Mirror HQ, there was a group of alternation escort officers from the God Militia around Zeshald, as they were here to keep a lookout of any wary assassination attempts towards Zeshald. Amongst them, Plausha held a very special position and was relatively close to him.

Plausha was a collection from the water troupe provisional members, she was recruited during the restructuring of the forces whereby talented personnel were being secured from the god militias.

Originally, she as Zeshald's disciple wanted to joined the water troupe. As she was once a provisional member of the elite team, her being around Zeshald didn't seem to be unnatural or uncomfortable in anyway, thus there wasn't any suspicion of her being a spy from Izapnar's camp.

While having lunch in the HQ simple and long table, Plausha was nervous as she was wondering what kind of information she should report to Izapnar. For the past few days, in spite of being in the vicinity of Zeshald, nothing serious was being talked about and she only heard some silly jokes.

Due to being busy with activities from the organization, she could not ask for divine arts guidance, and it would seem unnatural if she were to inquire about the different things of the organization. At this rate, she was getting impatient by the topic of tomorrow's weather and the passing of time.

"Ahh.....just as I thought, I am not suitable for this."(Plausha)
"What's wrong?"(Zeshald)

Plausha was sighing as she had nothing to do. That made Zeshald worried about her and he asked Plausha if there was something wrong.

"Er, erm.... I heard that a fortress had suddenly been built at the border."(Plausha)
"Hmmm, it's about Deer North Fortress right? There is no need to worry about them coming over and attacking for the time being though."(Zeshald)

"So it's like that? Oh.....but, I heard that the Darkness God Corps are stationed at that Fortress...."(Plausha)
"What, even if that guy likes to fight, he will not move unless something happens. Wouldn't it be better if everyone kept quiet?"(Zeshald)

Zeshald was chewing on his vegetables while speaking about it. After hearing the Hero of Gearhawk being mentioned, Plausha began to suffer from the complicated feelings she had, but she buried them deep into her sea of thoughts in order for Zeshald to not to become aware of her unnatural behavior from his words.

The Water Mirror members who were attached closely to Zeshald were not very suspicious about Plausha, although she had said to be a provisional member of the elite team, they still identify her as an immature girl. As Plausha is a strengthening type water arts user, she doesn't seem to have any attacks to be of threat.

However, Zeshald on the other hand was informed by Reifold who had informed him that Plausha was a spy planted by Izapnar to extract information from him. There was a hidden message within the previous sentence "the darkness corps will not move unless something happens" .

"That said, I don't think that Izapnar will step down quietly without giving a fight."

Today yet again, those who caught glimpses of the current Queen's entourage who was once the divine instructor and his disciple having a meal, felt like a harmonious scene of a grandpa and his granddaughter. But in fact, under the surface of the seemingly calm water, a quiet battle of authority and symbolism was being waged.

"It seems that the heavy rain is beginning to calm down."(Yuusuke)
"Ah, Captain Yuusuke"

The heavy rain that has been pouring for the past 3 days have becoame a drizzle, the sky which was covered by grey clouds that seemed like white clouds of fog have began to scatter. On the roof of the fortress overlooking the surroundings, Yuusuke was called out by one of the soldiers who was standing guard, he then began to raise a box-like object over the edge of the stone wall.

"What's that?"(Soldier)
"A kind of Telescope for looking out"(Yuusuke)

By combining and customizing the bed frame with the floor of the roof passage, he made a telescope installation. It was a Kepler Telescope, which had an expected magnification of about 30 times. By adjusting the focus and stabilizing the frame, he was able to observe the water catchment that had form which surrounded the fortress.
(TL notes : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Kepler)

"Ng?"(Yuusuke)
"What's wrong?"(soldier)

"....here, take a look"(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke fixed the angle and the direction of the telescope and asked the soldier to look into it. He pointed towards the rock which was there earlier and it seemed to have moved.

".....Captain, the Gear Hawk Fortress Hero is waving his hands....! He~ He is pointing his finger at us"
"No way, Did he really noticed us....? Let's move away from here!"

The wind arts corps who were hiding behind the rocks' shadow and monitoring the fortress, began hastily shifting their location. As it was raining, the ground was very muddy thus the wind art scouts began their wary search for any nearby enemies.

"But... How did he found out where we were lurking around?"
"The opponent on the other side must have used something to spot us, maybe a telescope of some sort."
"That's impossible...there is still quite some distance between us."

The captain of the wind arts scouts who was hiding behind another rock began to grumble as they were being spotted, and his subordinates might have just been right on target by saying that. Coincidentally, for this mission they were all carrying telescopes of 4x to 6x magnification .

"Hmm it seems like those are the wind arts militia from Blue Garden. Oh and they are apparently hiding behind the rock shadows."
"It seems that they do not have the technology to monitor us from this distance clearly, as they are searching for an enemy."(Yuusuke)
"Hah! I understand that. Even so.....this telescope have such an amazing performance."

Using Yuusuke's telescope the soldiers stationed atop of the fortress have been tracking the movement of the wind arts scouts without difficulty and were all amazed by the performance of it. It was the first time that they had seen this telescope which could overwhelm the distance of the ones used by the reconnaissance commanders.

"Now then, I just need to make another 5~6 of these"(Yuusuke)

Happy with what his telescope could do, Yuusuke began descending the roof passage.

As Yuusuke came down to the first floor, he could hear a voice approaching from around the corner of the stairway.

"Isotta."(Yuusuke)
"YES!?"(Isotta)

Surprised by her name being called, Isotta literally jumped up, causing Yuusuke to become surprised as well.

"There, there. There is no need to be surprised like that."(Yuusuke)
"Ah, eh, oh, Captain....I, I'm sorry."(Isotta)

As he was focused on the task at hand of making a wide range search operation by using the so called "Line of Sight", he was surprised by the sudden moderately tensed voice. The figure of her placing her hands on her chest while slightly blushing with her heart throbbing intensely had caused Yuusuke to realize that she was giving off a quite cute impression.

Up till today, there were several highly powerful divine arts users other than Isotta who tried to attempt a search operation, but it seemed that they couldn't detect the enemy's' presence. As she is able to control and feel the flow of her power, she is able to locate presences from her investigation.

"Could you still feel them?"(Yuusuke)
"Yes, yesterday....during when the rain intensified, I could feel that the quite strong presences were nearby...."(Isotta)

Even now, she could dimly feel the presences despite them being away from the line of sight of the huge plains as the rain drizzled. There were a few presences that were felt closeby.

"Hmmm, what kind of wind presence did you felt when using your wind arts?"(Yuusuke)
"Erm...."(Isotta)

Basically, by using wind arts one could use it to feel the wave of divine arts, by spreading the wind around to pick up these kind of presences. Normally, any divine art users would be able to detect or feel this wave. Although it is not as clear as seeing or hearing directly, it is on a level where it can be felt.

In order to search for enemies, one has to induce the wind with their own divine arts, and one is able to sense and identify the information from the subtle trembling in the air due to divine arts. But for the search of the same type of wind arts users, if the person was very sensitive to the wave of divine arts, he could interfere with the search technique that was being used.

Yuusuke wanted to implement a radar type equipment that he had an image of floating in his mind, when he suddenly remembered about Shinha, who was also an [Artless], who didn't have any ounce of divine power and thus the search technique couldn't be applied to locate them. There was one time that Krielov had said,"The [Artless] are hard to locate."

"Hey, Isotta are you able to feel the wave of the [Artless]?"(Yuusuke)
"The [Artless] do not have any wave presence of divine arts in them--a Oh! I see this.... is everyone's presence."(Isotta)

After abruptly realizing something, she began to clap both her hands and raised her voice. It was an unusual gesture coming from Isotta in public, and she immediately became aware of her own behavior and looked down to hide her shy face. Yuusuke began to inquire from her what did she understand and knew. She replied while bearing a laughter.

"Uhhh....Erm, I.....grew up around the [Artless]....."(Isotta)

As Isotta was brought up by [Artless] parents, her day to day activities of interaction with them made her realized that they too wore a familiar and distinctive faint wave which she had felt. She didn't notice that she would be able to feel such a distinct wave in such a place, the same kind she had felt while she was in the city, at the [Artless] streets.

"So that means that there are several [Artless] nearby."(Yuusuke)
"Yea.....it seems so, right?"(Isotta)

It seems that they have been trying to get close and move away from the fortress.

"To be this far away from the ranches, what are they doing?"(Yuusuke)

"Well....."(Isotta)

It seemed that the presences that Isotta had felt was from the several [Artless] who were farther away from this place and nearer to the Blue Garden borders. There were many questions as to why these [Artless] were in such a dangerous zone? Both of them became puzzled by the situation.

"Just in case, if anything happens, alert me immediately."(Yuusuke)
"Yes."(Isotta)

Yuusuke was wary about those mysterious presences and the only person on his team who could detect such a presence was Isotta, thus the future surveillance was entrusted to her.

Evening ~~

The starry sky and moon was hidden behind the thin cloud covering, as the moonlight dimly shone upon the lands of Kaltcio, barely escaping the dark night. The rain which lasted until the evening, had formed water puddle-like reservoirs around the vicinity, which were reflecting the swaying moonlight.

In the Oval Office of the council halls in Paula's central HQ, Supreme Leader Officer Izapnar begin discussing the measures with his confidant Volmes, about the organization "Water Mirror", which is under the Queen's direct control, along with the message report from Plausha about Zeshald.

"That Bastard, he seems to keep everything in check"(Izapnar)
"Nevertheless, with this, it seems that she is a spy for our side."(Volmes)

By dangling a bait in front, it is one of Volumes favorite tactic to allure someone.

"But that darkness god corps..... and the report about that fortress, can we trust the information of the wind arts scouts?"(Izapnar)
"As investigated by the wind troupe, there is most certainly a fortress standing there."(Volmes)

From the information that was gathered by the Wind arts Scouts, it seems that a large number of god militias have affiliate themselves with the queen's faction. Also due to being told about the undeniable fact of the presence of a fortress, the quite skeptical and erratic Izapnar was frowning. The Hero of Gearhawk who decimated the main force of his personal army was keeping an eye right at the border.

".....by using the opportunity of the dangling bait in front of his senses, we can make use of Belushya."

Currently, Izapnar is doing a force analysis of the war potential each side holds. Using the reports he carried out different simulations of strategies. The War Potential coming from Fonclanc was estimated to be about 50 troops.

The total number of the forces from the darkness god corps is unknown, reports of it place it at just above 20 members, and there is also the soldier delegation led by the flame god corps, with a combined force of roughly 30 members.

"Right now the ground will be muddy due to the rain, the horse drawn carriages will have a hard time to run, an outfield battle will cause a fall in power for the flame arts and wind arts."

In other words, as long as they hide within that stronghold, even the hero of Gearhawk would not be an upcoming threat. Izapnar came to this conclusion that as the ground have been absorbing too much water, it became a natural barrier.

The current situation of the Water Mirror is that the chosen god militia who are highly loyal to the queen are being sent over to Kofta. As they were to become the direct power to the Queen. Those who remain in Paula now are those who rejected to head over to Kofta and those who are in the middle of the selection, within these groups of people where were some who were trying to get some breathing space.

"There is a possibility of those who would double cross."
"If we were to arrest the head, Zeshald, there will be a mob."

"Hmmm, if we were to act, now is the chance."
"If it is possible, the recovery of the sacred treasure must be carried out confidentially."

The First step is to produce a civil war like play and in the middle of all the confusion, we will use it to attack Zeshald. Even in an event of failure, as long as we can take control of the hideout of the organization it will be sufficient. Within Paula the difference in strength could be clearly seen, as they are an organization whose flag was just raised, it is predicted that they would immediately be destroyed due to their lack of resistance.

"Immediately convey to each and every elite troupe to gather. We begin recruiting for the elimination strategy starting from the training facilities. It does not matter if they are still candidates."(Izapnar)
"Yes, I will do it immediately."(Volmes)

On the 8th day of the fire month of Zalnar, during the twilight period before dawn. The Civil War broke out within the Fortress City of Paula, Blue Garden.

26. Evil God’s Roar

The Civil war turmoil within the Fortress City of Paula began unnoticed as the majority of the populace was fast asleep. On the second floor passages, within the great walls where the Water Mirror HQ lies, the elites team of Izapnar were poised to launch their raid, which was followed by a battle proceeding the god militia's ambush of the Water Mirror Camp.

Just before the raid was carried out, one member of the elite group, without any regards of any danger, had brought the attack information to the Water Mirror HQ.

"Ah, Mr.Zeshald."
"What's the current situation?"(Zeshald)

In one of the rooms of the Water Mirror HQ, those who were injured in combat were being healed. In the corner of that room, several water arts users were doing their utmost to heal one lady. The young lady who wore a burned uniform of the water troupe, had been burnt around her shoulders. She was the one who brought information about the attack.

"Currently, the passageway is on a offensive and defensive stalemate, the girl has 3rd degree burns and our water arts can't..."
"Hmm, let me try..."(Zeshald)

Zeshald began to exercise his power of healing and the lady's skin started to regenerate instantly. The fact that Zeshald had mastered the healing arts, and on top of that, the effect of the sacred treasure added on, allowed him to display a miracle type of healing not known to the world of water arts in history.

A burnt wound caused by fire arts which would normally take more than 10 days to recover, was instantly healed without leaving a scar.

"AMAZING.....so this is the power of the sacred treasure!"
"Fortunately, had she not informed us about it, there would have been more injured allies."(Zeshald)

The Water Arts personnel rejoiced at the recovery of the lady, and one after another they began to carry the wounded into the room. As she was still unconscious they had left her on the bed. Zeshald began to heal those who had major injuries and at the same time he took over the command as the water mirror's military commander.

Since a while ago, Reifold had ran over towards the Queen Risha's location, thus the current situation was being transmitted immediately.

"Now then.....Yuusuke's reinforcements might not be able to make it in time."

Izapnar chose this day and this timing to attack as a strategy to make the most out of the geographical, force balance and weather advantages against the Water Mirror. Since the founding declaration of the Water Mirror, Fonclanc had also started to move. As the restructuring of the forces against the foreign enemy have not been completed yet, Izapnar had to use a way to seal and prevent the growing power by restraining the amount of forces the Water Mirror was gathering.

If the water mirror were to continue to have a substantial amount of force flowing to the Queen and if her forces were to stand in line with Izapnar's forces, the difference in terms of authority and the support from the populace within Blue Garden would reverse their positions in power.

In order to prevent that from happening, he had to crush the water mirror no matter the type of method, be it brute force. The Water Mirror had expanded to a threatening size, and Fonclanc's troops were at the border at the same time. Due to the history they had with the Darkness God Corps, who were glaring at them from the border, he was forced into this situation.

The rain, which had continued to pour down for 3 days until yesterday, became a blessing in disguise for Izapnar.

"What's the current situation at the battle front?"(Izapnar)
"All according to plan., Belushya who notified them of the raid is seriously injured and currently protected within the Water Mirror Camp."(Volmes)

"Great, all that is left is to wait for the attack on Zeshald"(Izapnar)
"Just in case of failure, should we press on a little more?"(Volmes)

Izapnar replied "Yeah" to the proposal Volmes made. They continued their advance in order for the Civil War play to not fail in it's deception. At the same time, they had to eliminate all of the Queen's forces that were here in Paula, as they didn't have anywhere else to retreat to.

Just now, a scout who was monitoring the fortress on the border had arrived with news about Fonclanc's troops whom were getting to a sortie position. Currently, a part of the great wall is where the battles are occurring, it is also within the distance range whereby immediate reinforcement could reach by rushing with high speed horse drawn carriage. They could reach it in approximately 40 mins.

However, now the ground was in it's worst condition and the visibility during the dark night is bad. No matter how many wind arts were used as assistance, the wheels of the horse drawn carriage kept sinking into the mud under the weight of the many soldiers it was transporting, thus the speed wasn't very satisfactory.

Even if they had managed to travel at the normal speed, it would be around sunrise when they arrived at the vicinity of the Great Wall. By that time, everything would have been settled. For the time being, everything is going according to plan.

"Fufufun, It will be very interesting if I returned Zeshald's corpse in reply for Gearhawk Fortress."

Opportunities is what you create for yourself, Izapnar was convinced in this saying.
(TL note: I wonder if I should use Sun Tzu quote instead:" The opportunity to secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself")

"Captain! Please Wake Up, Captain Yuusuke!"
"O waa? What What!"(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke who had been working late all night and didn't lay down until a little while ago was awakened by the Aisha who rushed breathless into his room.

"A Civil War in Paula! Zeshald's Water Mirror and the elite troupes of Izapnar had just entered a state of war!"(Aisha)
"!!! They had finally made their move."(Yuusuke)

Just as the Deernook Fortress began to fall asleep, due to the sudden change all the soldiers began to run around and the overall tension gradually increased . Yuusuke immediately took his change of clothes and began to change into his squad's uniform which was prepared before hand for a sortie. His hard work had paid off, up til now he had been working until midnight on the new equipment that was meant for the horse-drawn carriage.

The moment Yuusuke arrived at the base floor of the fortress, the carriages which were fully prepared by the workers who were swarming the area were all ready to go. The soldiers were also all lined up and ready for the sortie. Hivodir clad in his flame corps uniform spearheaded the leading and instructing of the soldiers.

"You have finally come, Yuusuke, at last we can depart! Now, give the soldiers an awe inspiring speech."(Hivodir)
"I'll pass. Fonke, are the carriages ready to go?"(Yuusuke)
"Please wait awhile, just another 2 more units."(Fonke)

While watching the retrofitting of the special modification to the soldier's carriages, those whose carriages were already done with the preparation had began to move. The special modification to these carriages,

which enabled them to output a decent speed even if the ground was muddy, was the attachment of sled plates in place of the wheels. Yuusuke had been working til late at night because of these plates.

"Please wait a moment Yuusuke! Shouldn't there be a speech before departure? Also, this is my first battle!"(Hivodir)(TL notes: seems like hivodir really wants a speech)
"Well, then I shall leave that to you."(Yuusuke)

"What? Okay, leave it to me."(Hivodir)
"Make it brief."(Yuusuke)

With Hivodir's speech as an BGM, the sortie preparations of Deernook Fortress were done and they began to depart. The clear sky after the rain was sparkling full of stars, the smell of the wet soil and humid winds was stroking on the cheeks and hair along the jet-black cloak. Yuusuke who was finally awake from the sleepiness, took in a deep breath.

"The Preparations for the sortie have been finalized! We can depart anytime!"(Fonke)
"Yosh... let's move out!"(Yuusuke)

The Darkness corps and Fonclanc's military soldiers led by Yuusuke numbered a total of 50, their mission was to depart from the Deernook fortress and reach the Great Wall of Paula.

~The Civil War broke out in Paula.~

The battle between the Water Mirror god militias and Izapnar's elites troopers have been going on for about one hour.

"Emergency Report! A Convoy of Fonclanc's Military is approaching us!"
"WHAT! Have you checked it properly!"

Due to the sudden news of Fonclanc's approaching Izapnar army, he unintentionally let out a panicked voice,as it was far too early even for a immediate sortie to arrive after the start of the attack. Volmes began to issue commands for defense troops which were scheduled to be relocated towards the direction in which the attackers were approaching from.

"How in the world....no, it must be that strange divine arts of the darkness corps which could build a fortress in an instant."(Izapnar)

He began grinding his teeth due to the miscalculation of not applying common sense to the plan. But he still had the location advantage. The Great Wall of Paula is a barrier comparable to a 4 story building. It would not be an easy task to counterattack and capture from within the Great Wall.

"You have arrived, Volmes."(Izpanar)
"Apparently, Fonclanc's military have arrived a little too soon."(Volmes)
"Ah, but if they could not enter the Great wall, all will be well."(Izapnar)

As long as the battle with the Water Mirror rages on within the Great Walls. The fact that you can't help from the outside is unchangeable.

"A defense force have been placed to intercept them and to prevent them from approaching the Great Wall."(Volmes)

The moment they had a visual on the Great Wall, Yuusuke's group began to spread out. Immediately, the confirmation of multiple enemies from Blue Garden had been sighted.

"As I thought, the foothold is inferior."
"Captain, it seems that a squad of troopers have appeared from the Great Wall's top pavement."

"Are they the intercepting troopers?"
"Probably not, they seem to be using divine arts which specialize in bows."

One after another the soldiers got off at designated position and awaited for further command from Captain Yuusuke. Using the cover of darkness, the tension from the large force have started to loosen from Yuusuke, as he began to do a hand signal of advancement for the whole force.

The ranged defense troops whom were placed on the pavement of the Great Wall at the very last minute were all on alert. Attempts to contact Zeshald, who is currently commanding the Water Mirror army, through wind arts were all being blocked by a strong wind arts interference.

"It seems like there are occasional light from that small window on the great wall....most likely, that is the place where the battle is occurring."(Vermeer)
"It's not good to jump in unprepared, have the materials arrived?"(Yuusuke)

"It had just arrived, it is pretty heavy and couldn't really move very fast."

The stones that were used for the cornerstone construction of the fortress were all fully loaded into 3 carriages and had just arrived at the scene a little later than the soldier's carriages. Fonke who was entrusted with the command of transportation came over to report.

"Yosh, Let's Begin."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke stared towards the opening which Vermeer spoke of as he opened up his customization menu and selected the stones from the wagon.

He use the technique which he send down the stones from the skies at Gearhawk Fortress. Using it he created a row of connecting square stones which allowed him to customize the "Fortress City Paula" as a group items directly from a distance.

The Great Wall of the fortress city is divided into several layers, the moment the corner stone was connected to the wall the tempering began.

On the pavement of the Great Wall above, there were Blue Garden defense troopers who were in position to guard against Fonclanc's army. On the place where Fonclanc's troops had gathered earlier on, beams of lights could be seen near the lower part of the Great Wall, where it seemed to come from a elongated stone pillar.

Volmes, who is currently taking command of the defense forces had read reports about the weird divine arts which the Hero of Gearhawk used, the divine arts would have a phenomenon of "pre-emitting lights", thus he judged that it was clearly a gimmick of something, thus he began ordering his subordinates to destroy the stone pillar below.

"What's up, quickly destroy it."(Volmes)

"Er, erm...."
"The fireball doesn't seem to have any effect on it!"
"Same results for the water lance!"
"The wind blades too!"

They tried using lumps of stones created by the earth arts and dropping on it, but contrary to its looks of being long and narrow, it was as strong as a large stone pillar.

"Shit....., what the hell is it made out of?"

Just as the calm Volmes have started to feel impatient ~~

"..... OH NO! EVERYONE RETREAT!"(Volmes)

Including the location of the Great Wall where they just stood, the whole area began emitting light over a wide radius.

A downward draft wind from Bouzas mountain blew onto the Great wall. When the Great Wall was built, it had blocked the wind coming down from Bouzas mountain. For a long time, the earth facing the Great wall that had wished upon the caressing of the wind, bathing in it for more than a dozen years.

For the first time, the earth on the opposite side was bathed in wind.

"WAAAA, WHAT THE HELL IS THIS!"
"What happened! Is it an enemy trap?"

A part of the great wall spanning about 100m on the left to the right disappeared, the internal of the structure became exposed from the side in full view. The pillars, floor and ceiling didn't collapse under it's weight as it had been further reinforced.

The Water Mirror troops and Izapnar's elite troupe who were currently in the ongoing battle in the passageway were all suddenly thrown into a stage theater. The troops from both sides, who were under confrontation, were taken aback by the event when they saw Fonclanc's army.

"Mwahahaha! This is interesting!"(Fonke)
"Fonke! Stop it with that sinister laughter in the middle of the battle, it's imprudence."

Due to the current event, the whole army stopped their movements, only members of the Darkness God Corps were showing some actions.

"Erm, Full Force attack!?"(Yuusuke)

Because everyone seemed stunned, Yuusuke took the opportunity and ordered an attack. The Fonclanc army immediately headed towards the elite troops from Blue Garden who were inside the Great Wall, the first blow was sent out by Shaheed.

"OUCH! Argh, aaa~~~....~~"

Enhanced by the Darkness God corp's sword, the water ball which was amplified hit one of the opposing elite troupe members as he was dropped to the ground. In order to return that blow, the elite troupe scattered and hid behind the nearby obstacles and pillars, while attacking from the side.

"Captain, make a declaration as the Water Mirror reinforcements."(Isotta?)

"Oh, alright. Isotta, please use your voice."(Yuusuke)
"Yes."(Isotta)

Using her wind arts skill she secretly transmit it to a certain target, this skill allow her to amplify a voice wave extensively by using the surrounding area's air, this technique is called "Hiroden". Using Isotta's skill to amplify, Yuusuke's voice resounded around the area where it had become a battlefield.

"~~~ Ehh, This is the Darkness God Corps Captain Yuusuke, I come from Fonclanc. We are here to cover the Water Mirror's Army, Best Regards.~~"(Yuusuke)

In that moment, the whole battlefield when silent.

"A~....Captain, should you say that now?"
"Yuusuke! No matter how tempting you shouldn't be using [Hiroden]!"
"Well, in some sense, it's so captain-like."(Shaheed)

Vermeer made a confirmation as he wiped of his overflowing sweat. "Why aren't there any introductions to my squad?" Hivodir pointed it out as he protested. Shaheed began to show understanding of the "Yuusuke-like" actions, Fonke wouldn't stop laughing, while Aisha took an alert stance.

"There is no helping it, I have no experience and never took drama lessons before."(Yuusuke)

Rather than that, he took the enemy by surprise as their movements have stopped after [Hiroden], Yuusuke sure is defiant. Though it seems that it also stopped the allies' movement.

"In any case, we came from Fonclanc to dabble in the leadership of Paula and to cover the Water Mirror Army! Attack the enemies!"(Yuusuke)
"Roger that! Everyone attack the enemies!"

Yuusuke reissued his attack command. The one he had always rehearsed was finally put into practice. Due to the distance, most of the people from the Fonclanc army couldn't deal killing blows, but in the drafty passage in front of the elite troops were the Water Mirror army whom they were currently confronting, thus it became cumbersome and absurd to attack.

"Damn it....where are the reinforcements! What happened to the suppression, at this rate we will all be eliminated."
"No this place is no good! Let's retreat to where there is a wall!"

The elite troupe began to retreat just in time before the Water Mirror troops pushed up front and chased them within the passage. While Fonclanc's army sniped the elite troupe from far, in order to cut down the enemies' strength.

It became a shooting game with Divine arts due to the poor visibility as both armies were in the dark, but the elite troupe released a light divine arts to differentiate between allies and enemies. They didn't realize that Fonclanc's army was in the wilderness outside and hidden in darkness, all the while the counterattack for the Water Mirror forces wasn't given.

The defense troops whom finally arrived from the pavement above the Great Wall started to counterattack and intercept the position, but due to the distance their attack were inefficient, those who were hit directly only abstained some injuries.

The Sky on the east gradually began to change from deep blue to purple, notifying the arrival of dawn. While in a winning mood, Isotta felt a dangerous presence approaching the left rear of Fonclanc's army and issued a warning.

It was the same [Artless] presence that she had felt while in Deernook Fortress. Thus the other scouting units became wary and started to use their wind for a searching operation.

"From the left flank a cavalry unit is approaching! No wait...., the direction it's heading is the Great Wall of Paula, I think most likely the combat zone!"
"Even cavalry?"

"I can't feel the divine arts wave....certainly not"
"The cavalry is approaching! They...number 200!"

After hearing the reports of the 200 cavalry approaching, the soldiers began causing a commotion. The entire Fonclanc's army consciously turn towards the direction of the approaching forces, the approaching sound of horse hooves blowing up the muddy earth could be heard. And then ~

"[Artless] Warriors!"

From the darkness cutting through the lights of the horizon, a battle group of [Artless] equipped with swords and bows. The White corps appeared.

The white corps that suddenly appeared stopped about 500m south of the Fonclanc's army, away from the chaos. Once there, they began to arrange their ranks in a line. It seemed like they weren't going to be involved in the fight, as half of the horses were being led away.

Even so, a unit consisting of one hundred [Artless] Warriors, were taking up position in line as they glared towards the Great Wall of Paula. But as one looked closely, they could see personnel with red, blue and green hair; those with divine arts amongst them.

"~~~ We are white sword cavalry from Gazzetta. By order of King Shinha, we are here to assist our king's ally: the Hero of Gearhawk, Yuusuke.~~~"

The use of the wind arts, [Hiroden], from the Gazzetta army resounded through the area. Gazzetta is a nation whereby it's citizens have equal rights, it's lands were made up of mainly mountain ranges, with it's ancient capital guarded by its [Artless] king. There are rumors whereby they have a facility which fosters [Artless] Warriors within their territories.

There was rumors of the participation of Gazzetta's [Artless] Army in the upcoming battle. Confusion spread across Fonclanc's army, Yuusuke felt so depressed to hell like a cameraman's viewfinder, to deal with the situation and calm his feelings he opened up his customization menu screen.

He began organizing each and every piece of information he had, as the other side had said that they were here as an ally. He summarized that Shinha was being called king. As the overall person in charge, Captain Yuusuke used his firmness and calm attitude to assess the situation, and from their declaration it seems that they weren't enemies, thus the confused Fonclanc's army gradually regained their composure.

"Captain, the servants would like to know how the communication with the Water Mirror is coming along?"
"Well, what about it?"
"Even without reinforcements now, the Water Mirror should be able to become the leaders of Paula at this rate."

Although it is said to be allies, the Diplomatic relations with Gazzetta were shallow, and there was uncertainty of whether the [Artless] corps would be participating. In all honesty, they were most likely here to cause confusion. After Yuusuke consulted with his subordinates he replied the Gazzetta Army with [Hiroden].

"~~Thank you for the reinforcement. However, we are not going to have reckless sacrifices. Thus we hope you would stop and line up as a deterrence force.~~"

He issued a request command for the oncoming force to stop advancing. By the way, Hivodir was supervising the dialogues. The response from Gazzetta army goes like this, "We will be in favor as an ally in this battle, but our military command authorities have the goal to release our brethren that are held here."

"....this smells suspicious."
"Ah, they seem like a determined bunch."
"What does that mean?"

According to Vermeer and Shaheed, it seems that Gazzetta is taking the opportunity to invade Blue Garden by joining Fonclanc's armed intervention using the excuse of being Yuusuke's ally. While Yuusuke was listening to both of their opinions, a new [Hiroden] started to echo the surrounding area.

"~~ I am the Queen's immediate organization Water Mirror's leader Zeshald~~"

Now it seems that a [Hiroden] of Zeshald's voice from Water Mirror have been issued, the nostalgic voice to Yuusuke that came from the Great Wall.

In a dignified and heavy sounding voice, he began to talk about the Queen's policy of Blue Garden [Artless] protection policy and the future where the policies will be heading towards. Due to the small scale of armed conflicts, and the most of the personnels in the walls are civilians, he would appreciate if Gazzetta would stop their invasion.

Zeshald declared that he did not consider the Gazzetta army as a reinforcement of Fonclanc. Zeshald had also arrived at the same conclusion as Vermeer and his gang, and in order to restraint Gazzetta's Army using the cover plan as Yuusuke's reinforcement, he used [Hiroden] again.

"~~Even with the same reasons of a war of liberation, it doesn't seem like you're on the Blue garden's side~~"

Gazzetta Army rebuked by saying so. Not observing the pretext of the Queen's protection, they declared the release of all fellow countrymen which are owned by the Queen. That itself is clearly a declaration of war. While a three way struggle of [Hiroden] began, the battle became lull.

"Didn't this become a little confusing?"(Yuusuke)
"Captain, it seems like there is a new force approaching from the mountain side of the great wall!"
"Blue garden's reinforcement?"
"No, it seems like.....the Queen's banner"

New troops began to appear from the mountain side of Great Wall, these were the combat troops gather by the queen's force in Kofta to assist in the civil war.

"~~ I am Blue Garden's Queen, Rishause Toole ~~"

The Queen's dignified voice echoed through the battlefield. She approved the Fonclanc's military intervention, while declaring that she will completely resist against Gazzetta's invasion. With the Queen's personal appearance by using [Hiroden], all the soldiers regardless of affiliation who were in this place were cheering.

At the same time, using the flow, the supreme leader officer Izapnar used his voice and inspired a battle cry.

"~~ Comrades, this must be an invasion conspiracy of Fonclanc and Gazzetta! Attack the Enemies! ~~"

In order to restore the momentum of the Blue Garden's God militia, without including the elite troupe, which had seem to tilted towards her majesty's favor, he tried to steer the attention of the whole army by diverting it using a sense of crisis to the presence of predators. Izapnar is currently using his favorite technique which allows him to move people, thus reaching to the top positions he held today.

"~~Do not attack, stop this battle immediately. Izapnar pull back your soldiers. Prioritize the evacuation of the citizens.~~"

The Water Mirror Militia Forces and Izapnar elite forces were currently in a standoff in the passage, while the Queen's forces move into a position where part of the wall which had disappeared in order to restraint the Gazzetta's army from advancing. The Fonclanc's army was all lined up on the side while looking at the Militia forces and elite forces glaring at each other.

Gazzetta's army which was further south of Fonclanc's army was staring intensively at the Great wall. Their current position was looking at the back of the Water Mirror's forces.

"What is this situation, it became very chaotic."
"......Erm, Yuusuke. Doesn't it seem to have become quite an awkward situation?"
"As you can see, it became a 5 way fight."
"No, it's not that."

"Looking at Gazzetta's movement, to bring their army to such a place, they are most likely trying to publicize their presence around the world," Hivodir said as gave his own analytical speculation. Due to the fact that the other countries are also paying attention to this battle that is happening right here.

The anticipation of Fonclanc and Blue Garden conflict turning into a war, using the basis of pretense, of helping the Hero of Gearhawk and invade Paula to release the [Artless] of Blue Garden. And by causing a large number of deaths to the divine arts users, citizens of Blue Garden, the expected outcome was that the [Artless] from various places would retaliate from their oppression.

In the end, the aim which Gazzetta was seeking was the salvation of the [Artless]. At the same time, it was to increase Gazzetta's national power and so that it's forces will also be enhanced.

"If it continues to go according to this, it would crushed King Esvobus's aim."

Within the narrow remaining walls of the Water Mirror HQ, Zeshald as the commanding officer of the militias was considering the aim of Gazzetta.

If Gazzetta were to be permitted to invade, even if it becomes a one sided battle, Blue Garden's internal dispute will not lessen. And in order to manage the internal conflicts, Fonclanc will be driven to a state of war.

In order to fight against Gazzeta, Blue Garden had to form an alliance with Fonclanc, but the possibility for that was low. Up until now, Fonclanc have been unilaterally suffering from Blue Garden. On the other hand, Blue Garden would be unilaterally suffering the damage if Gazzetta joins the fight.

The Queen was riding on a ruse of Fonclanc's scheme to throw Blue Garden into confusion. Both countries have too many reasons that could cause a strife. While Gazzetta was waiting for the 2 countries to be plunged into the worst situation and take advantage of it.

"King Shinha.....his aim is to overthrow the world using [Artless] and to secure Yuusuke."

In the middle of the Gazzetta Army, surrounded by all his subordinate soldiers, Shinha was carrying out the final confirmation of the strategy with his staff officers for the attack on Paula. It was his long cherished wish to revive the ancient white clan empire of his family, the quiet fighting spirit have began to take his first step onto the battle.

"When this war is over, will the Hero of Gearhawk be regarded as the enemies of divine arts users...." (Shinha) (most likely talking to himself)

There is also the possibility that Fonclanc, in order to avoid hostility from the other countries, they might take actions to punish the Hero of Gearhawk. In that case, it is also a good way of disposing of him. To embrace death bravely or to struggle with death, in the end only death shall await.

-If he survived and fled to Gazzetta, everything would be good, at that time I will welcome him with my arms wide open.- As Shinha thought about it.

"The preparation for the assault is complete."
"Yosh.....let's begin with the wind art's assistance."(Shinha)

After listening to Hivodir's analysis, Yuusuke began to groan as he then realized the seriousness of the situation. At the same time a report came to him regarding the Gazzetta army, who had started casting their movement assistance wind arts. As it seems, they have finally started to march. From the analysis, Gazzetta excuse for the participation in war would cause Yuusuke to be labeled as a traitor.

Their real purpose was to release the [Artless] who are from the same race, but the problem was that they have declared themselves as an ally of Yuusuke when they entered the battlefield. Yuusuke, had an accomplishment whereby he promulgated a regulation of protection on [Artless] in Sanc Adiet.

"Perhaps, he wanted Yuusuke to be chased by the Divine Arts Users around the world and to seek refuge in Gazzetta."(Hivodir)
"What the hell! Why does he want to make it difficult for Captain!"(Fonke)
"Ther, there is no point in being angry with me."(Hivodir)
"o~mu...."

Hivodir became a target of anger to soothe Fonke who had lost his reasons of restraint, while Yuusuke puzzled over what he should do next. Yuusuke was surprised that Shinha was the King of Gazzetta, but as he currently was in a troublesome situation, there wasn't any spare time to be surprised about it.

"A guy like himself, doesn't seem to be a two faced snake."(Yuusuke)
"Er,erm.....Captain, that person.....I can see him within the ranks."(Isotta)
"EH, Seriously!?"(Yuusuke)

Isotta nodded her head with an uneasy expression, as her green hair swings about.

"~~SHINHA! I know you are inside the ranks, so pull back your forces! We could discuss on how to improve the treatments of [Artless] at another time.~~"

The Queen's forces prepared for the invasion of Gazzetta's army, while the Water Mirror forces and Izapnar elite forces were still in a glare off competition in the passageway. As the tension heightened on the battlefield, Yuusuke once again used [Hiroden] from Fonclanc's troops to Gazzetta's army and echo the cancellation of the assault.

The Commanding officer of the White sword cavalry headed towards Shinha for consultation.

"Hmm.....Don't bother about it, advance." (Shinha)

Shinha lifted up the Large white Platinum colored sword which Yuusuke had repaired previously and issued an advance orders to the lineup towards the Great Wall of Paula.

~In the end, he is the same as the Divine arts users, unable to change.~

Fonclanc's forces could do nothing and watch as Gazzetta's army began their invasion. If they were to attack Gazzetta's army who declared themselves as an ally, they would cause a huge risk on diplomacy in the future and currently there is no option other than using force to stop them.

"tch... to stand out like that so suddenly, isn't it foul play..."(Fonke)
"That's diplomacy, this is a strategic problem."(Vermeer)

Fonke curse and kicked the wagon, while Vermeer could only look frustratedly at Gazzetta's army. At the same time Shaheed was showing a sullen face towards Yuusuke for further instructions as Yuusuke's [Hiroden] was being ignored.

"Captain, what should we do?"(Shaheed)
"Don't Kid with me.....when did they became my ally."(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke began to mumble and grumble to himself, Aisha became worried about him.

"Captain?"
"Diplomacy, Strategies, foul play, common sense.....FINE BRING IT ON!"(Captain)

Yuusuke looked up and ran towards the location of the wagons, as he glared upon the Great Wall to where the Gazzetta's army seemed to be heading towards. The wind, blowing from Bouzas Mountain, caused his Jet Black mantle to flutter. Every single one of Fonclanc's forces began to notice Yuusuke roaring at Gazzetta's army, the white sword cavalry.

"I WILL SHOW YOU SOME REAL CHEATS!"(Yuusuke)

Using both his hands, he opened the Customization Menu. Although the customization menu can be operated with one hand, using both hands won't actually double his efficiency, it's just a matter to set the mood. Yuusuke had entered his so-called "Serious Mode".

"Vermeer, gather them around me! Do not let anyone to come through!"(Yuusuke)
"......Roger!"(Vermeer)

Vermeer realized the different atmosphere around Yuusuke and immediately executed his command without reaffirming it. The circumference of the wagon which Yuusuke got onto was being surrounded by the darkness god corps, while the soldiers surrounded it in protection teams.
(TL notes: something like first bound and 2nd bound in defense tactics)

"Hivodir, you will lead a group and encircle the Gazzetta's army. We will inform you the timing from here, your instructions are to restrain them as much as possible until the very last minute."

"Wah, the difference in numbers is too great.....I understand, I will figure something out."(Hivodir)

Hivodir is a secretly prideful person, but in time of need he is one who would do what needed to be done. Although he was clearly aware of his fear of the overwhelming odds, he consented to the mission without backing out.

"Isotta, inform the Water Mirror using transmission to evacuate with the citizens to the mountain, right now."
"ye-YES!"(Isotta)

Rather than using [Hiroden] she used her normal wind arts transmission to contact the Water Mirror forces. It was how he had predicted, due to the chaotic situation, the wind arts interference was gone. She immediately transmitted the message to the Water Mirror Militia and reported it directly to Zeshald.

"DON'T UNDERESTIMATE GAMERS SHINHA!!!"(Yuusuke)

Using both his hands he operated the customization screen at a very quick pace, a 3D object began to form rapidly.

Meanwhile, inside the HQ of Water Mirror, a shadow figure got up slowly, taking this opportunity to complete her mission~~~~~.

27. Miscalculation

Shalnar's month of fire, eleventh day~~

An old clan village hidden in the Gazzetta mountains.

The "village" looked more like a small fortress than a village, and stone buildings were neatly arranged around the environs. At a first glance one could mistake it for a secluded mountain village.
In this small group of buildings, one house set itself apart from the rest, as its disposition was more akin to a shrine than to a simple building.

"Hey granny, still alive and kicking strong, I see." (Young man)
"And look at you, all grown up. You're so tall now." (Village priestess)

The young man was familiar with the village priestess since he was a baby, so after exchanging a friendly chatter the two moved onto the main topic.

“What kind of a revelation have you received this time?” (Young man)
“Mhm… the Evil God has descended.” (Village priestess)
“Hmm? Him again, what kind of fellow is It now? An ancient monster or a progenitor of the four great gods (四大神の祖)?” (Young man)
“His body is similar to that of the progenitors. I think he’s probably a variation of a man.” (Village priestess)

The peaceful atmosphere from before had disappeared as the young man listened carefully to the priestess’s revelation.
This descent granted the clan’s most desired wish. In ancient times (EN:A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away…), the evil god that descended to Kaltcio had become the source of prosperity for the white clan, although this evil god had also lead their clan to their downfall. This evil god had called himself [Wizard] and had a body of a man (as opposed to that of a beast).

“He has descended in Fonclanc.” (Village priestess)
“A human, eh? Then maybe this time he will destroy the prosperity of the divine arts users?” (Young man)

In the world that was controlled by the white clan, those with ability to use strange arts were a minority and they were treated as second rate citizens and mockingly called [colored]. The [colored] worshiped the four great gods who, they believed, had given them their powers. The evil god himself, however, had called that power [magic].
The [colored] had called themselves the [divine arts users] and gradually rose to power. Finally, the white clan was driven off to this region.

“This, I don’t know. However, I saw that his hair was jet black.” (Village priestess)
“Hmm… I guess there’s no other way… I, myself will go and confirm it.” (Young man)

Another humanoid evil god that had descended before the [Wizard], was a monster clad in human flesh. This monster had culled the [colored] with his power, reducing their numbers to a dwindling minority and providing the white clan with their chance to flourish.
The monster’s statue, enshrined in the shrines of the [artless] all over the world, was based on the shape of this creature.

According to the mission that was passed on to every king of the white clan since the ancient times, when an evil god descended, the king himself would have to go and confirm the existence of the god. Now the evil god **has** descended, and his image was close to that of the black statue. The young man left the priestess’s shrine and returned to his castle to immediately start the preparations for his journey.

“Do you really have to travel alone?” (King’s aide/concubine)
“I have to, this is a king’s mission.” (Young king)
“But… if something were to happen to the body of your majesty’s…” (King’s aide/concubine)

The king’s aid and concubine objected. The king touched the belly of his worried partner to calm her, as she insisted him to at least take a guard with him,.

“It is too late. Besides, my heir is probably already within you.” (Young king)
“B-but, we don’t even know if the baby is a girl or a boy.” (Kings aide/concubine)

As his lady said that, he calmed her down with a kiss and set out towards the lands of Fonclanc.

***

Zalnar's month of fire, 2nd day~~

"Impossible. Is that guy really the evil god?" (Young king)

After receiving surveillance reports on the movements of the Blue Garden troops, he decided to invade Paula and ordered the troops to gather up. While the troops were gathering in a town near the country border, a small scout unit was sent towards the ruins of the Gearhawk fortress and the main force was relocated by separating it into smaller groups so as to avoid detection.

"Your majesty, what are you going to do regarding Risha sama?" (Someone close to Shinha and Rishause)
(TN: she was called Risha in the webnovel)
"Risha's father is long dead, she is now but a bird in the cage. We are going to free her together." (Young king)

The queen had inherited the late king's dream, even if all she had managed to do was to protect it in the miniature garden that was named Cofta. But even that city would be eventually taken by the supreme commander of Paula. When that happened, the queen's protection would not be able to extend to the salvation of the [artless].

"Being a queen, she will probably be unable to accept our help" (Someone close to Shinha and Rishause)

"In that case we will free her through sheer force." (Young king)

Carrying his silver greatsword, he advanced towards the queen's army that had taken up a defensive position in front of them. He charged forward, defying the inferior position he currently was at, as the defensive wall stood atop the slight slope on the plains. [Artless] soldiers, who were the descendants of the white clan, were the masters of armed combat. Their charge towards the defendants with weapons prepared in both hands was truly a frightful sight to behold. Faced with it, the divine arts users just barely held their positions with their pride and loyalty of being the queen's army.

"Mrhm, it's regrettable" (Zeshald)

Zeshald climbed up on the wall and was observing the battle from the upper part of the defensive wall. Just as he began to think of whether he should send the divine arts militia, who was coordinating the evacuation of the refugees, to cover the queen's forces, a string of light has stretched from part of the fortress towards the vanguard of the queen's army and a bright light began to envelop the vast area around the fortress.
The next moment only the beads of light remained dancing in the air and at the same time a huge wall appeared separating the queen's army from Gazzetta's forces.

***

Gazzetta's soldier's pace was slightly disrupted by that huge wall, which suddenly separated them from their foes. Shinha looked over his shoulder towards the advancing Fonclanc army as he ordered his army to circle around the wall so as to not halt the advance completely.

"Yuusuke!" (Shinha)

There was quite some distance between Shinha and Yuusuke's darkness god corps. Moreover, the knight corps, led by the fire god corps knights, were in between them. Yuusuke's main guard squad numbered at

around twenty soldiers.
If a squad were to branch off from the main force to interfere with the divine arts, they would have a hard time evading the knight squads in the rear and would incur unnecessary losses.

“Read guard, prepare for battle!” (Shinha)

Shinha chose to use a more reliable method and used his triumph card.

[“Well, Yuusuke, how will you respond do this?”] (Shinha’s thoughts)

***

Yuusuke was looking at the section of the Paula’s wall where it had connected to his wall. He had roughly determined the coordinates of the queen’s army just by his sight alone and was creating the wall by relying on little more than his intuition.

As he was continuously manipulating the customization menu, a squad member who was monitoring their surroundings and scanning for potential enemies, suddenly informed him about the approaching enemy.

“Gazzetta cavalry is approaching from behind us! They number around forty!” (Yuusuke’s scout)
“That’s bad. Didn’t those guys retreat some time ago?” (Vermeer)
“Captain! You should recall our troops.” (Fonke)

“That is not necessary.” (Yuusuke)

The darkness god corps and knights numbered at around twenty people. Around half of them were well versed in combat type divine arts. If the cavalry that was almost twice as large in numbers were to rush into them, Yuusuke’s group would be trampled and had no chances of winning. Yuusuke turned towards the impatient knight, told him that there was still some distance between them and the enemy, and continued to manipulate the customization menu.
Yuusuke had already anticipated this, so he chose a prearranged customization from the menu and executed it immediately. A stone pavement appeared before the defensive line of his troops.

“Everyone, get on the stone pavement!” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke jumped out of the wagon, screaming the order, and started running himself. Darkness corps members reacted in a heartbeat while the escorting knights followed behind them, as everyone ran towards the pavement. Gazzetta cavalry continued their charge and now was about fifty meters (~55 yards) away from their target.

“Did everyone climb on it? Everyone? Is there anyone still standing on the ground?” (Yuusuke)

After making sure that everyone got up onto the pavement, Yuusuke swiftly opened the customization menu and pushed the execute button.

It was an experimental divine art based on the idea that if the vertical movement of a customized object was possible, then the horizontal movement should be possible as well.

At the moment the fluttering light beads disappeared, darkness god corps and accompanying knights appeared next to the queen’s forces.

***

“Wh-what the heck?!” (Shinha)

Shinha was watching the rear guard forces as he sent an assault force towards the darkness god squad, while his forces were circling around the huge wall. The way that the assault had played out had left him so speechless that he could only raise his voice in surprise. For a moment he thought that the darkness god corps had disappeared, but they suddenly appeared next to the queen’s forces.

“He moved his entire force?!… That’s impossible…” (Shinha)
“Your majesty, if this continues we will be pincered between the queen’s forces, supported by the darkness god squad, and the Fonclanc forces.” (Gazzetta officer)
“I know that myself. Order the cavalry to cover this position.” (Shinha)

The cavalry group was dumbfounded with the sudden loss of their target, as they received a transmission through wind arts to return and back up the main force. Shinha accepted the fact that Yuusuke’s power was greater than he had thought, thus he began changing his strategy, redirecting his army to defend against the attack from behind using the very wall that had foiled their plans.

Contacting the guerilla forces of [artless] in the villages from all over the continent, he ordered them to capture people, close to Yuusuke, under the pretext of protection. Even if they failed to show the might of Gazzetta to the world in this battle, he wanted to at least get some leverage to make Yuusuke come to his country.

“That’s right, there was a girl… named Sun… Communications officer!” (Shinha) (TN: princess peach lol)

***

Yuusuke’s troops had teleported near the main fortress of the queen’s army. As he turned towards the Gazzetta army that should emerge around the corner of the wall at any second, Yuusuke requested the queen’s army to retreat in the direction of the mountain. The queen’s army conceded, saying things like, “Since it’s an order from the evil god corps, we will stand down,” but the militia showed resentment towards the command.
However, Queen Rishause, having heard about the Darkness God corps (Yuusuke) from Zeshald and Reifold, decided that if they really are that strong, it would be better to entrust this battle to them.

According to the queen’s decision, Fonclanc’s army would take over the duty of engaging Gazzetta’s forces. Following this decision, Blue Garden’s forces could honorably retreat from the wall, passing through the fortress and head towards the Bouzas mountain range.
Yuusuke looked up at the fortress, cheerfully smiled, and waved at Zeshald who was looking at him from up there. For a while they stayed like that, glancing at each other.

“The queen’s army is retreating.” (Vermeer) (TN: names in this dialogue are added at random. Will revice as the manga catches up)
“Hivodir’s group has gone around the wall and is pressuring Gazzetta’s army from the flank.” (Isotta)
“The cavalry group had started moving in the rear and is probably attempting to join with Gazzetta’s main force.” (Shaheed)
“Good, prepare to send a signal to Hivodir’s group. Order everyone else to back up the water mirror.” (Yuusuke)

Soldiers were quick to execute Yuusuke's order which he gave in a somewhat calm manner. Yuusuke called out the map item in his customization menu that he had prepared earlier and was waiting for the exact moment to activate it.

On top of having their hands full with the water mirror forces, Izapnar's elite troops were completely surrounded as they now stood not only against the water mirror's force but the queen's army as well, and they also had to face Fonclanc army and Gazzetta invaders. Faced with these circumstances, some of the soldiers on Izapnar's side began ignoring their commander's orders and started surrendering to the queen's forces.

Before long, Gazzetta's army circumvented the huge wall and appeared before the other armies. Yuusuke got lucky, as his enemy appeared in the map item data menu near the wall he created. Because Yuusuke's attacks were of indirect terrain interference type, he needed a customizable map item next to the target that he wanted to attack. Shinha's plan was to back themselves against the wall, thus enabling Yuusuke to do just that.
A wall of light stretched outwards from the Yuusuke's wall and surrounded the White Sword. A considerable amount of stone was required to trap a group of more than a hundred white haired soldiers. Luckily the required resources were available nearby, though the vast wall at the upper part of the main defensive wall of the fortress was continuously disappearing.

"Y-your majesty! That…!" (Gazzetta officer)
"Impossible… did he just confine us within the wall?!" (Shinha)

In the midst of the captured White Sword army, Shinha was late to notice that this nonsensical divine art that had trapped his army also erected similar walls to capture the cavalry group that was moving on their individual orders.

"Grrrrr! He got me… I was wrong to make decisions based on common sense." (Shinha)

Just like that, Gazzetta's cavalry corps under Shinha's command got themselves captured in a situation similar to the one Izapnar's forces had found themselves in, without crossing their swords with their enemy even once.

After a short while, Hivodir's corps caught up the captured Gazzetta troops and climbed up the wall. Hivodir was laughing loudly, looking down at the captured troops, thinking that they can now be easily disposed of. However, Yuusuke did not allow him to carry out his wish and ordered approaching Gazzetta cavalry to halt its advance. The cavalry group, seeing their main army being taken hostage, had no other choice but to concede.

***

"Gather the remaining members of the elite troupes in the central command. In the face of such odds we have no other choice but to regroup!" (Izapnar)

Izapnar was planning to barricade himself and his remaining soldiers within the central command while keeping the masses agitated, thus prolonging the civil war and giving him time to come up with a retaliation plan to shift the blame towards the queen. First of all, the very fact that the queen allowed a foreign army to enter their lands, and even more so, to let them enter within Paula's walls was preposterous. Also, that

she had relied on the strength of Fonclanc's army to repel the Gazzetta's invasion was a national disgrace and a grave mistake.

There were no more doubts that the queen's entourage, Zeshald, was loyal to Fonclanc. He shifted all his plans to promote the propaganda that the central figure of Blue Garden was deceived by Fonclanc. By manipulating the information like that, he planned to blame the queen for the disgrace of all the divine arts users of the nation.
For that reason he somehow had to deal with Zeshald. Without eliminating Fonclanc's support for the queen, it would be impossible to oppose the reconciliation policy between the king Esvobus and queen Rishause. Thus, he could only wait for Belushya, who had successfully infiltrated the water mirror, to accomplish her mission.

"It's not over… I will manage somehow. I expect them to split part of their force to deal with the Gazzetta's army, so only part of them should head towards here." (Izapnar)

While he was grumbling about the measures he had to take and the prospects for the future, the supreme commander was thinking of a speech that would serve to agitate the masses. Izapnar crumbled the paper with a speech that did not please him and threw it away. As he filled a cup with water from a jug to clench his thirst, only the sound of the cup being filled resounded in the room.
Only then did he noticed that his hands were trembling wildly. Putting his hands into the pockets to hide the trembling, Izapnar continued to polish his plan.

"At any rate, if I can make the queen lose the support of the masses… Hey! Where is Volmes! Communications officer!" (Izapnar)

The plan to prolong the civil war was the do or die last ditch effort for Izapnar. Once the water mirror had gained the upper hand and forced the elite troupes to withdraw, it was already too late to clutch for victory. Except for fleeing the country, the only remaining opportunity for Izapnar to stay alive was to beg for the queen's pardon.

"What is happening with the regrouping of the elite troupes?! I want the report, FAST! Whatever you are doing… do it faster for fuck's sake!"

Only Volmes stayed at Izapnar's side, who was muttering and shouting by himself in the supreme commander's office of the central command.

28. Shinha's Warning

As the disarmament of the Gazzetta army was being carried out, Zeshald was keeping a close watch on the withdrawal of the elite troops and was providing the appropriate commands to prevent his own forces from chasing too far. With the conclusion of this battle, the relationship between Blue Garden and Fonclanc would probably improve. Feeling like a huge weight was lifted off his shoulders, Zeshald let out a sigh.

The civil war in Blue Garden would end after the capturing of supreme commander Izapnar and after gaining complete control of Paula's central command. Even though Gazzetta's attack had caught him by

surprise, their king, Shinha, had provoked Yuusuke, the [God of Calamity], and had spectacularly self-destructed, experiencing a calamity for himself.

“Zeshald dono, shall we proceed to take over Paula’s central command?”(Queen’s army’s officer)

“Proceed with it. I will join the fight myself to hasten our victory.”(Zeshald)

While contemplating his future plans in the well ventilated headquarters of the water mirror, Zeshald looked down at the urban areas of Paula. It was about time for the citizens to get up and start bustling around their businesses. In the center of this urban area, soldier carriages were being prepared for the raid on Paula’s central command.

The divine arts users that formed Zeshald’s escort looked at the rushed preparations for the raid and the disarmed Gazzetta soldiers coming out of the huge wall prison structure. It took just a moment for them to lose their concentration and…

“Mhm?!”(Zeshald)

Belushya charged at Zeshald from behind, aiming her hand between his left shoulder blade and his spine, using her pride, the disseminating type (付与系) water art. Belushya’s water art would freeze her target instantly. It was a terrifying assassination type water art which, if she managed to freeze the chest of her opponent, would freeze the heart causing her target to die instantly.

Although the person’s resistance varied according to the strength of their divine arts, Belushya had trained her divine arts from young age. She was sure that even if Zeshald was an exceptionally strong divine arts user, and even if he had a sacred treasure that increased his resistance to other divine arts, he would not be able to defend against her if she focused only on his heart.

—-TSISH sound of something breaking reached her ears.

Feeling the familiar feeling in her hand, Belushya was assured that she had successfully completed her mission and started moving towards her retreat path. But, as she tried to move towards the back of the room, someone grabbed her arm. As she slowly turned to look over her shoulder, she saw Zeshald, who she thought was surely dead, grasping her arm.

As she tried to shake off the last struggles of the man, a broad grin appeared on Zeshald’s face that left her breathless.

“?!”(Belushya)

“It’s unfortunate.”(Zeshald)

Being sure that she completely froze the man’s heart, she once again stretched her hand to repeat the attack. Unfortunately for her, this time Zeshald was faster.

“Shoutensei!”(Zeshald)

“Uh…? Hyaaaaaa!”(Belushya)

After receiving a water art counterattack from Zeshald, Belushya's body tensed and stiffened as it bent backwards and, with a loud shriek, the assassin fell down. As the body reached the floor it started convulsing.

"Wh..what is this?!"(Guards)

"Hmm, it looks like an assassin to me…"(Zeshald)

Explaining the situation to the startled guards, Zeshald picked a fragment of a shattered ring from the floor. It was a fragment of the silver ring that was delivered to him by Reifold together with the fake sacred treasure. Yuusuke called it "Sacrificial ring."

This ring had the effect of taking on a fatal blow for his wearer. It was truly a mysterious item since it would only protect its wearer from any fatal damage once, after which its effect would end immediately.

If the wearer was poisoned, the ring would not react to the poison until the moment when death approached the wearer. It would then activate, taking the deadly damage for its user only to have the user die from the same poison immediately after the ring has ceased functioning. It would be the same for deaths by drowning or burning. If one was to be squished by a heavy object, the outcome would also be the same.

If the wearer was stabbed with a sword or spear, the ring would take the fatal damage from the blow, but the user was still very likely to die from the after effects of the wound or the weapon still protruding from his body.

To tell the truth, if one had to compare the ring to its counterpart, the Sacred Treasure, the usability of the ring was, at the very best, questionable, since the appropriate time to use the ring could not be controlled and the usage itself was difficult. Despite that Zeshald got lucky as the assassin used a special technique in her attempt to kill him.

This time, the ring judged Belushya's [Freeze] to be a deadly divine art and activated, taking the damage instead of Zeshald. At that moment the recovery effect of the sacred treasure kicked in and started to heal his frozen heart. Zeshald did not lose his consciousness and supplemented the effect of the treasure with his own healing type divine art. As his body had nearly inexhaustible vitality, it did not suffer much stress while the heart had stopped for a moment.

"Is she…dead?"(Guard)

"No, I used a strong divine art aimed at her blood vessels."(Zeshald)

When Zeshald touched his assassin's arm, he felt something out of ordinary and struck there. Leader of the water mirror just shrugged his shoulders, talking about the unexpected effectiveness of his divine art.

When she was a child, Belushya had misused a divine art and was wounded all over her body. Since that incident she had lost almost all her senses of touch.

Since she felt nearly nothing, she had a strong pain and injury tolerance, thus Belushya became proficient in the normally dangerous disseminating type divine water arts. These arts, coupled with her assassination skills, had placed her in the center of the underground operations until now.

Perhaps it was because of her constitution and sense of duty, she did not show any ordinary emotions and left others with a cold impression. In time, coworkers started teasing her, calling her names like “Ice queen”.

Touching her hand, Zeshald had healed the nerves and Belushya, overwhelmed by the sudden wave of sense, had simply fainted. For this woman who had not felt such sensations since she was a child, these sensations became a destructive torrent of pleasure (TN: I shit you not, that was what the author wrote….) that had simply blew her mind.

Since Belushya’s divine art did not affect her opponent if she could not get close to him, she was restrained while she was still unconscious.

Finally, as her convulsions calmed down, the face of the assassin, nicknamed ice queen, blushed slightly, a faint happy expression appearing on her face.

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Only the highest ranking members were informed about the assassination attempt within the water mirror’s headquarters. Zeshald was currently leading the divine arts militia against the Paula’s command. At the same time, Shinha calmly stood before the queen’s army, against the wall that had captured them. Although his army had been disarmed and he was clad in handcuffs, he maintained the composed atmosphere around him.

Thinking that he might have had some complaints, Yuusuke approached the king of Gazzetta. The queen had also approached Shinha along with two of her handmaidens and now stood directly before him.

Queen Rishause was a beautiful woman and her light blue, long hair only enhanced the tidy atmosphere around her. Her handmaidens were also quite beautiful and although they were twins and had identical looks, the air they carried around them was completely opposite.

If princess Violet could be compared to fireworks, queen Rishause gave off an image of a clear stream. Yuusuke had made a note of the fact that there are a lot of beautiful women in the Blue Garden. (TN: in Japanese the text read “Yuusuke had entered a record in the database of his mind…”)

Determinedly standing before Shinha, Rishause frowned slightly and started to speak with a strong? voice.

“You… what were you planning to do?”(Rishause)

“I was on my way to meet Risha. To my regret, our big moment has been spoiled.”(Shinha)

“War is but a moment of luck,” shrugging his shoulders as he said this. Rishause showed him a painful look on her face in reply.

“Why did you start this absurd fight?”(Rishause)

“It was not absurd, I just slightly underestimated the strength of the darkness god corps.”(Shinha)

That very strength was the “absurd” thing here. If not for that power, Shinha would have won and would not have been in the state he is currently in. They (Gazzetta) were not all united and the fact that the leader mobilized the army before his heir was born spoke a bit about that fact.

“Did you intend to attack me?”(Rishause)

“Never. My plan was to free you all along.”(Shinha)

“To free me? Are you saying that I am just a bird in a cage?”(Rishause)

“Don’t you realize your position? Or are you pretending to be as tough as always?”(Shinha)

Shinha acted as if he could see through the firm attitude that the queen had been displaying. Rishause sighed and murmured, “You arrogant man…”

“That may be right, however a king without pride can’t lead his own people.”(Shinha)

Shinha and Rishause spoke to each other as if they had been acquaintances. Listening to their conversation that was quite similar to a lover’s quarrel, Yuusuke decided to leave them be for a little while longer.

“Hey you, you have been acting rude towards her majesty for long enough!”(Queen’s handmaids)

Unable to endure Shinha’s attitude towards their queen any longer, one of the twin sisters, Masha, shouted at Shinha.

“We are old friends, right Risha?”(Shinha)

“We were. In the past.”(Rishause)

Still, Shinha’s shameless and carefree attitude, which he had displayed quite carelessly, along with the strong displeasure shown by the queen, had Misha fall for a feeling that was pretty close to jealousy and the handmaiden started shouting abusive remarks towards Shinha.

“[Artless] trash!”(Misha)

That instant a ferocious smile appeared on Shinha’s face forcing Misha to instinctively back off.

“Did you hear that, Risha. Even your closest retainers are like that.”(Shinha)

“…”(Rishause)

“Eh? Eh?!”(Misha)

Rishause was continuously biting her lips. Misha’s younger sister, Sasha turned towards her sister, who was looking towards the two with bewildered and confused look on her face and explained.

“Because her highness treats [artless] similarly to servants, she is striving to free them through her political measures.”(Sasha)

Even if the divine arts users and [artless] were allowed to live their lives in the city, both parties antagonized each other. They would have to break down their preconceptions towards each other in order for them to lead their ordinary lives side by side.

For that reason [artless] ownership was used as a stepping stone and hit first by changing it to protection policy. So, such an utterance by a person that is closest to the queen left a distinct mark on queen’s reputation. Realizing that Misha hurriedly turned towards the queen and hastily said.

“I didn’t mean it to sound like that! I was referring to his lack of respect towards royalty and his social position—”(Misha)

“I am also a king of Gazzetta, yet there is not a drop of respect in your actions~”(Shinha)

“You are prisoner of our country!”(Misha)

“Aaah, without even crossing swords with your country’s military once and having been done in by the darkness god corps of Fonclanc?”(Shinha)

“Ugh…!”(Misha)

Resolute arguments and facts were sarcastically countered and, furthermore, reinforced.

“By the way, the old man, commanding the water mirror, is also a person that was related to Fonclanc. Hmm, I thought this country was supposed to be called Blue Garden…”(Shinha)

“Grrrr…!”(Misha)

Rishause objected Shinha’s suggestive tone by slightly strengthening her own voice and spoke to calm Misha, who seemed to be on the verge of blowing up.(reminds me of the head popping scene in the kingsman)

“Fonclanc only lent us a bit of their strength this time.”(Rishause)

It did not mean that Rishause accepted the caste system that was the basis of Fonclanc’s social structure.

“You might be thinking of it as such, but what will really happen?”(Shinha)

Shinha questioned Rishause’s diplomatic skills and asked whether the queen will avoid king Esvobus’s reconciliation policy.

“Will you let the Fonclanc army or the leader of the water mirror stay, or will you make them leave?”(Shinha)

Hearing this, a dumb expression appeared on Misha’s face. Sasha also seemed concerned and slightly narrowed her eyes. After eventually driving out the supreme commander of Paula and taking the complete power within her grasp, wouldn’t she become the same figure head again only in the hands of a different puppet master? This was the true question hidden within Shinha’s words.

“I, I…”(Rishause)

This did not mean that Rishause was not being uncomfortable as she cast her gaze downwards to hide the shaking of her irises. She screamed in her heart that she did not have any other choice, that she had no other means of opposing Izapnar. The words fitting for a “bird in the cage”, as Shinha has called her, were running amok within her heart.

“So, what is to become of us?”(Shinha)

Having driven Rishause into the corner, Shinha completely changed the topic from the question he had asked earlier. Relaxing his shoulders and returning to his previous tone, he asked about the fate of him and his army. As they were currently imprisoned by Blue Garden, the queen was the person who would decide their fate.

“…In my name, I order you to immediately leave the territory of Blue Garden.”(Rishause)

Rishause, with her authority of the queen, ordered to release Shinha and his troops, and for them to leave her country. Her handmaidens objected to the queen's decision to let them go just like that and urged her to reconsider, however the queen stood strong by her decision. Gazzetta's army had not dealt much damage to Blue Garden and the soldiers did not seem particularly dissatisfied either.

Their army's strength was intimidating, but in the end they were not able to do anything and became prisoners of war, thus part of the divine arts militia soldiers were happy with the decision.

"Shinha, I will definitely fulfill my father's dream. Promise me you will not lay a finger on this country until I fall."(Rishause)

"You mean… to watch over you? Very well, I will watch over your country for a while."(Shinha)

Shinha arrogantly looked down on the queen until the very end. Although her handmaidens were scowling, Rishause relaxed, with the tension in her face becoming replaced by a smile.

"Truly… you have not changed at all since back then."(Rishause)

"You too. People probably won't tell you that though. Oh, and you have also become quite a beauty as well."(Shinha)

"Wha-what the hell do you think you are saying!"(Rishause)

"Lady Rishause, your language, your language!"(Misha)

Having received a surprise attack from her opponent that she also had feelings for, queen Rishause carelessly let the feelings that she had sealed deep behind her aura of the water priestess queen surface for a brief moment. With Misha's remark, she blushed while covering her mouth thus showing her cute side.

"Phmph!"(Shinha)

"A-anyhow, Gazzetta army is now free. Remove their sha—"(Rishause)

Rishause ordered the divine arts militia to unfasten the shackles of Shinha's army, which was restrained in a separate place.

Dissatisfied with the arrogance that Shinha showed towards their queen, the two handmaidens tried to convince their queen to reconsider, saying things like "They are our prisoners after all," aiming to get revenge on Shinha while showing their superiority.

Shinha began analyzing the hand (TN: as in hand of cards) that he was playing with, looking for a way to destroy their scorn and to gain an advantage for his army. As he only had the cards of pride and belligerence, he decided to try playing them.

"Let me give you one piece of advice. For the white clan, their weapons are only one of their tools."(Shinha)

Shinha said that with a feral smile, making the divine arts militia stop in their tracks and turn towards him with dubious expressions on their faces. Rishause stepped back as she knew the meaning of such an expression on Shinha's face.

"If we don't have our tools, we can fight using our bodies alone. LIKE THIS!"(Shinha)

Shinha lifter his shackled hands in front of his chest and tore through them by sheer strength. Seeing that, White Sword knights followed their king and one by one tore through their shackles. Although they were shackled with wooden shackles that were made to be used on the [artless], divine arts militia could only stare, eyes wide, as the shackles were destroyed using brute force alone.

However it seemed that divine arts users who were serving in the White Sword cavalry, could not mimic the same action and appealed to get the shackles removed via normal means.

Glaring at the frozen divine arts militia, Shinha kicked at the ground like a beast and instantly closed the distance between him and Rishause. Her two maidens reacted to that, but as Shinha was already leaping into Rishause's bosom, they could not put water arts defense nor attack Shinha anymore.

"…Wha?!"(Rishause)

"You are… naïve."(Shinha)

Looking at the sky blue pupils in the startled, wide opened eyes, Shinha extended his hand toward queen's head, gently grabbed a light blue strand of Rishause's hair, kissed them, and retreated after letting the strand of hair fall. The two handmaidens rushed to the queen's side, taking the position that Shinha was at just a moment ago and shot their glances towards the [artless] king.

Shinha sneered, turned his back at the women, and swiftly returned to his comrades' side. This series of actions seemed to have carried a meaning of "I could've broken the shackles and killed you anytime."

To tell the truth, it was not the kiss on the queen's hair, all of the White Sword were prisoners, yet the Blue Garden's side could not move a finger.

The divine arts militia were eyeing the Gazzetta army, which was preparing for their retreat with cautious eyes. Just as the atmosphere around them was starting to get dangerous, the black haired captain of the darkness god corps of Fonclanc stepped up to meet the commander of the White Sword knights.

This struggle carried some meaning as some of the Gazzetta soldiers visibly tensed at the entrance of the commanding officer of the [overpowered] darkness god corps.

"Hey, Shinha!"(Yuusuke)

"Yuusuke? You completely done us in~"(Shinha)

"Thanks to you, this had become troublesome again. Did you really have to show off your strength?" said Yuusuke as he approached Shinha. Yuusuke was so angry, that not only the atmosphere he gave off was different, but his attitude made a complete turn as well. Shinha shifted his gaze to observe the scale of Yuusuke's capacity and spoke of an important phrase (keyword) in a laid back attitude as if nothing had happened.

"You played out your role of an evil god nicely with that power."(Shinha)

"!"(Yuusuke)

Shinha showed a faint smile after seeing Yuusuke's face stiffen against his own will. Yuusuke expected that no one else besides Zeshald and Sun knew that he was called to this world to become an evil god. Rishause,

who was listening to them with her face still red from shame, tilted her head slightly at the mentioning of the evil god.

“Your presence in this world is large, and thin (weak/small?)”(Shinha)

Standing on the thousands years of history, Shinha stated his view of Yuusuke, a summoned being in this world. His words were heavy and thick with the desire of the resurrection of the white clan, inherited for hundreds of thousands of years since the forgotten times.

“The revival of the white clan warrants the fall of the rule of the art users. It is the role of the evil god to start this.”(Shinha)

“Why is that, can’t you live side by side?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke shot back at Shinha’s conclusion, inquiring what kind of reason or rule would require the destruction of either side. He did not inquire about the evil god’s part as he was worried about all the people around him.

“Divine arts users that caused the downfall of the white clan are living in prosperity thus the prosperity of the white clan required the downfall of the divine arts user’s world.”(Shinha)

“That is your answer, eh? But it would be just a repeat of what happened before, right?”(Yuusuke)

“That might be so, prosperity is not endless. This is the cycle of life that those, living in Kaltcio are bound to.”(Shinha)

“…You…”(Yuusuke)

Shinha’s grand speech, brimming with self-confidence and permeated with conviction that his knowledge was greater than anyone else, incited a desire within Yuusuke to find out what Shinha knows about the evil god. The three thousand years of history were collected in the eyes of the white clan leader.

“I will await you in the village where the history of the evil god is kept. You will definitely come to Gazzetta.”(Shinha)

Yuusuke, worried by the speech, containing some sort of threatening hidden message, tried to ask for the meaning of what Shinha had said. But, at that moment, a wind arts communications officer riding on the horseback approached them and whispered something to Shinha. Listening to his subordinate the Gazzetta king frowned.

“Let me correct myself. I hope you will come to see it for yourself if you are interested.”(Shinha)

Having said that Shinha saddled his horse and issued a withdrawal order to the white sword cavalry.

“Withdraw!”(Shinha)

Gazzetta’s army merged to a single unit several hundreds of meters away from the main fortress. There, they turned towards the direction of Gazzetta and started leaving the hooves of their horses resounding on the drying ground and raising a cloud of dust in their wake.

“Your existence is thin, eh?…”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke sighed as he watched the Gazzetta army off, dismantling the huge wall and repairing the main fortress was his top concern at the moment. After all, he borrowed a considerable amount of resources from the main fortress to build his wall and a huge part of the upper half of the fortress was gone.

“Still, except for being annoying it was useless…”(Yuusuke)

It seemed that early rising residents that lived in part of the main fortress, from which the materials were taken from, were in for an unpleasant surprise in the coming morning.

29. The Repatriation of the Darkness God Corps

The world will change when she woke up in the morning.

That was what she thought at that time. She woke up and started going about her normal routine, as she changed into her water troupe uniform. Normally, she would leave her room and head towards the water mirror hq, but for some reason she was walking down the aisle of the water mirror militia. By the time Plausha awoke, the council halls have been suppressed by the water mirror forces.

Originally, Plausha was suspected to be working for Izapnar's faction among the water mirror, but during this civil war commotion, she was sleeping in her room without participating in it, thus the suspicion was lifted off her. Thus, she wasn't being detained and was able to walk around freely in and out of her room.

Izapnar had heard from Volmes that there was a confidant girl, but there weren’t many details about her activities and the position about Plausha wasn’t told to him either. As the one managing the personnel selection and their intelligence network was Volmes, there were some fire arts personnel who knew about Plausha’s duty, but for some reason, they all disappeared. Izapnar’s screams could be heard, “That Volmes must have ran away!!!!”.

During the morning, elites teams and militia teams of the Water Mirror were scouring the urban areas of Paula, gaining control of facilities and bureaucracy institutions belonging to Izpanar’s faction. An imposing and orderly atmosphere of the carriages that moved through the streets of the city centre could be seen. The morning of Paula welcomed the end of Izapnar’s regime.

“Everything, is all but lost…..”

Plausha who was walking along the path of the Great Wall, found that an awfully lot of mobile stores had gone missing and were replaced by a new refreshing sight of unfamiliar uniforms of elites members on the street ahead.

Along the railguard was an individual who was looking far into the distance, he was wearing a black uniform and a black mantle, his hair was also black in color.

".....eh? Isn't this a different elite team?"(Plausha)

That person standing there wore the black corps uniform which had the Fonclanc palace's coat of Arms. She immediately stopped and stared at him as she realised that he was the rumored, "Hero of Gearhawk". In this case, it can be correctly said that one is too scared to move.

As he felt a presence, the person who don the darkness god corps uniform looked back at Plausha.

After noticing a cautious and trembling girl who was wearing an elite troupe uniform, Yuusuke spoke out to her with a wry smile.

"There is no need to be so scared."(Yuusuke)
"I~I'm not scared!"(Plausha)

Hearing her falsetto voice and seeing her trembling shoulders, Yuusuke replied with,"I am so wrong, I should have switch to the topic of the weather around here!" in an attempt to correct his mistakes.

"Ah, I'm sorry."(Yuusuke)
"N~no problem…."(Plausha)

When he first saw her, she gave off a similar impression, much like Sun, who is around the same age, like what Sun had experience in the past and being rather cautious, a kind of feeling like she was stuck in somewhere with walls. As it was their first meeting, prior to it just a few hours ago they were enemies, thus it was natural for her to have this reaction. Yuusuke thought and began to try to come into contact with her naturally.

The image which Plausha had imagined through countless rumors was: "A man of valor, who single handedly raised an entire elite team," and to her, it seemed that this wasn't the person standing in front of her, thus she was a little puzzled. Although he had an unusual appearance, she could not sense any divine arts aura from him. She couldn't exactly say why, but he was giving off an impression of a "Normal person".

"Hey you, are you really the Hero of Gearhawk, who everyone is talking about?"(Plausha)
"ah~that~.....honestly, it was a failure."(Yuusuke)

To hear that Gearhawk Fortress was a failure, surprised Plausha. Although he wasn't trying to be humble, Yuusuke even showed a gesture of scratching his head along with a look that it really failed, making people naturally curious about his reasonings.

“By using something apart from total annihilation, this time it seems that confinement had worked.”(Yuusuke)

A number of wind troupe members, the elites of Blue Garden, had been captured in Fonclanc territories,so the great number of victims of the fortress were mostly non-combatants. Due to the waiting of the civil war turmoil this time, it could have been solved quickly if Izapnar had stumbled earlier.

“Coulda Woulda Shoulda”, as Yuusuke laughed at himself. Plausha was confused with the words “this time”, as she did not know what had happened. But she reacted to Yuusuke’s other words, “It was good that now it didn’t end with total annihilation.”

“Why did you not do so?”(Plausha)
“At that time there wasn’t any time for feelings.”

“You should have just captured them,” she wanted to say that, but the words wouldn’t come out of her mouth so easily, “why didn’t you do so, if you had done that, my sister wouldn’t have died.” All the emotions that welled up inside of Plausha began to spill out and become one word.

“.....why?”(Plausha)

She unintendedly muttered it out, as her answer wasn’t what she intended to say.

“Because I was scared.”(Yuusuke)

“Eh?”(Plausha)
“I didn’t want to die.”(Yuusuke)

Plausha opened her eyes wide, as she was swept away by a vortex of gushing feelings caused by the so called “Hero” surprising answer.

“You are known as the hero and an elite knight and you fear death?”(Plausha)
“Well, I am still a normal person inside.”(Yuusuke)

Hearing that, Plausha shook as she remembered the impression of Yuusuke’s first words that felt like an “ordinary person” and she thought of her sister. From her memories of her, she remembered that she was a pretty ordinary woman. Although the side of her sister that she had shown during her mission was unknown to Plausha.

“What happened at Gearhawk fortress?”

Plausha asked this, as details of what happened wasn't circulated amongst the general public, nor the Militias of Blue Garden.

Being one of the related party, the "Hero of Gearhawk", he explained to Plausha the full details of the entire incident, including the mountain of corpses and the terrible things that had been done. Upon hearing the whole story, Plausha realized the extent of how ignorant she was.

Although her sister's wind arts were not under the attack system type, from the story that she had heard, the people who were involved almost non of them had not inflict direct harm and the fact that they had participated as team members in the operation. She didn't think that he had no choice, but to fight with her sister and to hear it from the voice of the person who had defeated her sister seemed to have a great meaning.

Although there were some parts missing, her sister's corpse was beautiful. It seems that "his" divine arts had restored the body to it's previous form. After knowing Yuusuke's nature, Plausha was able to organize her feelings.

"Captain! Wow you have immediately hooked a girl from Blue Garden~"(Fonke)
"No! Don't put me on the same level as you."(Yuusuke)

Hearing Fonke jeering from the bottom of the Great Wall, Yuusuke leaned out and retorted.

"Well then, I shall be heading off."(Yuusuke)
"Ah, yes, thank you for the conversation."(Plausha)

Looking at the jet-black mantle of the "Hero of Gearhawk" fluttering away into the distance, Plausha's gloomy expression had went along with it.

Once Yuusuke's group, which consisted of Fonclanc's army, had arrived at Deernook Fortress, it was declared that part of the soldiers' team were to be stationed in the fortress, while the darkness god corps were to return to Sanc Adiet. Hivodir was also together with him. His credit was, "to drive an enemy group 3 times as large as his team towards the trap that Yuusuke had laid."

Zeshald, on the other hand had to perform tasks such as the parliamentary inheritance and the setting up of a meeting for King Esvosbus and Queen Risha, thus he had planned to remain in Paula for another 4 ~ 5 days.

After which, he would be taking on the responsibility of an entourage to “Return the Queen’s sacred treasure”, followed by his returning to Rufk village for his retirement.

It had been 2 days since the Darkness God Corps and Hivodir had returned to Sanc Adiett, today is the 10th day of Zalnar’s month of fire .

The “Hero of Gearhawk”, now also known as the “Hero of Deernook” who had brought about victory for Fonclanc. This rumor became a hot topic in the city of Sanc Adiet. Information about Gazzetta was unnaturally not included. It seemed that King Esvosbus had been controlling the usual flow of information.

Many citizens of Fonclanc were celebrating the triumphant return of the Darkness God Corps, whom had returned to Volance palace.

“You have returned, Yuusuke!”(Violet)
“Welcome back, Mr. Yuusuke.”(Sun)

“I’m bac-k, why is Sun here in the palace?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke was surprised by the unexpected reception of his early return. Violet concluded his surprise with her answer, “I called her over.” It seems like she had been invited over to the palace on the evening of Yuusuke’s departure to the fortress construction and had been staying here since then. Although the main reason was being evaded, he could roughly guessed it.

“As I thought that Sun, who is living alone, is lonely and I wanted to hear more things about Zeshald.”(Violet)
“In short, I, myself am lonely.”(Yuusuke)

“Princess! This unworthy Hivodir have return from a successful mission!”(Hivodir)
“Oh, your efforts are appreciated. Father will be so glad to hear it.”(Violet)

After giving the appropriate thanks to Hivodir, Violet turned to Yuusuke and asked him about the mission. As Zeshald would be returning in a few days time, she was feeling all kinds of moods. Sloppily, Yuusuke headed towards his room after Hivodir said goodbye. After that, he saw Sun’s appearance which reminded him of the Gazzetta’s army and King Shinha.

“Hmmm… somehow they felt more like a battle force of a mercenary group rather than a national army.”

He began to analyze the things that Shinha had done, such as not considering the diplomatic relations between nations, removing any obstacles that seemed to block his way like an Overlord.

An attempt to drag Yuusuke along into the scheme was enacted, but if the sovereignty state of Gazzetta was able to gain Yuusuke, who had a imba divine art which could create special equipments like the ones he had shown in Paula, then they could simply trample all other countries in Kaltcio with just normal divine arts users.

“This is a foolish move that does not fit a fiance candidate, do not force me into it.”(Hivodir)

Things seemed to arrive at a stage where Hivodir chose to stick to Yuusuke. As he understood him by mingling with him often, Yuusuke doesn’t have any ounce of ambition to power, even though he was very close to Violet, there wasn’t any gesture of feelings that he was aiming towards the seat to become her husband.

If they had known it, the fiance candidates would find it funny that they were impatient. Even though, if Yuusuke had the feeling to do that, in some terms it might turn out to be better.

Currently his life up till now, he always had a complex about his divine arts abilities being weak, as he was from the prestigious house of Volce. Hivodir had always been thinking about how to rise to power in this world, but now he had began to change and realize the value of possible comrades and friends.

“Well, it is as it is. Wonder what would I get as a reward from the king ~ ”(Hivodir)

He experience his first battle and returning safely from it, thus resulting in him to allow composure to his feelings. Amongst the fiance candidates and the palace elites, there wasn’t many of them who had actual combat experience, due to the fact that there wasn’t any opportunity to do so recently.

On that day, the figure of Hivodir skipping along the hallways of the upper floors of the palace had been witnessed by several people walking by.

(Author notes : This time, in summary, the mess of Fonclanc and Blue Garden has been settled. The next part is expected to be a more relaxed mode.)

30. Mission Complete

The next day, after the Darkness God Corps had returned after completing their mission, Yuusuke was given permission to use his remaining vacation days, thus he decided to bring Sun back to Rufk Village. This time, due to his achievements at Paula, the King’s entourage and bureaucrats were deliberating on what reward should be given to Yuusuke.

Should they give him a formal identity as a noble of Fonclanc? Or to fix him a place like a mansion in the noble district? Then, a problem had occurred during the deliberating, as there were reports from the local administrator about the appearance of the Gazzetta army in the villages of the [Artless] within the territory.

Due to the rumors about the Civil war in Paula, there was an unnatural amount of missing information about Gazzetta, which was enough to cause a problem.

“Well then, I will see you guys in around 3 days time.”(Yuusuke)
“Thanks for your work, Captain.”
“Take care of yourself along the way.”
“It’s okay to come again and play with me, Sun.”(Violet)

Violet and Yuusuke’s underlings were sending them off as Yuusuke and Sun boarded the carriage from the palace that was headed towards Rufk Village.

“Come to think of it, this is the first time I had a ride in a carriage with only Mr.Yuusuke.”(Sun)
“Seems like it. Anyways, aren’t you tired from Violet abusing her power?”(Yuusuke)

“No, it was very fun.”(Sun)
“I see.”(Yuusuke)

They began leisurely chatting about what happened, along the highway. Sun began summarizing the events that happened in the 6 days of her stay in the palace. Eating together, playing cards together, happily chatting till late at night which was followed by sleeping together.

In order to draw the attention of Violet, the fiance candidates who could not display their gentleman face to Violet had treated Sun cruelly, causing Violet’s mood to turn sour, as their “gentlemanly” actions were just superficial in order to come in contact with Violet.

“Yeah, that reminds me that the fiance candidates other than Hivodir didn’t show their faces around Violet.”(Sun)
“In any case, Hivodir, in order to become the center of the fiance candidates, restrained himself from getting friends…”(Yuusuke)

As there wasn’t a chance to appeal frequently to Violet, they had to spend their time quietly. When the Darkness God Corps had headed towards Deernook Fortress, both Yuusuke and Hivodir were absent and that provided them with a chance, thus they aggressively tried to self appeal to her.

“Have you gotten used to the Divine art users?”(Yuusuke)
“....still, a little scared……but not as bad as last time.”(Sun)
“I see.”(Yuusuke)

“Ah, Do you know, Mr Yuusuke is like a teacher, as long as you are near there is a peace of mind?”(Sun)

And in that rhythm, they had steadily advanced on the highway, arriving at the Village around mid afternoon.

“SUN! YUUSUKE!”(Bahana)
“Aunt Bahana, we’re back.”(Sun)
You aren’t in a rush for something are you?”(Yuusuke)

After entering the village, the carriage stopped in front of Zeshald’s house, and out of nowhere the restless figure of Bahana had appeared. A group of villagers, including the officer from the harvest festival, came up to us too.

“Thank god, you guys have really come back….you both came back safely.”(Bahana)

Yuusuke and Sun had a stunt look on their face, as they began asking the reason why Bahana and the villagers were relieved. Just a few days ago, on the day when Yuusuke was fighting at Paula, a group of [Artless] warriors came to the village claiming to be Gazzetta’s army and were looking for Sun.

After hearing that Sun was being summoned to the palace in Sanc Adiet, they began discussing amongst themselves, “they are one step ahead of us~” and “Don’t tell me they have the ability to predict the future~”, as they resigned due to the fact that they could not kidnap someone who wasn’t here and they then had a wind art user to report to someone.

“Those who are dissatisfied with the current circumstances of living in this country, you can come with us to Gazzetta.”(Gazzetta guerilla)

After regrouping, they went to the village square and gathered the villagers, saying that their original purpose was to call out to all those who would like to seek refuge in Gazzetta.

However, in Rufk Village there was no divine art user controlling the area as Zeshald who was originally a Divine art user, had lived together alongside with the villagers. Thus, there wasn’t any tax collection, and there was Yuusuke, who recently became an officer under the conditions of favorable treatment which had improved the overall environment. Thus, there was almost no discontent from the villagers.

There were several people who were accosted to accept their proposal and had responded by following them. Also in the other villages, it seemed that a messenger claiming to be from Gazzetta’s army had visited and mingled with the neighbouring villages in the same way.

As Yuusuke had not heard about it in the palace, he thought that the only possibility was that King Esvobus was placing a gag order on this issue.

“I wonder if it is because of the protection ordinance after all.”

By the way, the ones who had joined the corresponder out of the villagers included Thalys. After the incident during the Harvest festival, he became docile around the village and had wanted a change in environment.

It seems like the terms for joining the Gazzetta army were to become the subordinates of the divine arts users.

Yuusuke began to grasp the meaning of the parting words of Shinha. At the same time, he realised that Sun would be targeted in the future. From Hivodir’s analysis of Shinha’s behaviour, he felt that Shinha would do anything to get him to come to Gazzetta.

“I hope that he doesn’t use such overbearing methods.”(Yuusuke)

According to the contents of Gazzetta’s national policy, it is difficult to view them as a goodwill ambassador.

Gazzetta simply aims for the revival and prosperity of the white clan empire. In order for them to make it real, they had to collapse the divine arts user society and destroy the world in which the divine arts user dominate. But ~~

~ A deeper insight ~

This world has a Raison d’etre of it’s own. The knowledge of the evil god. In a sense it’s a kind of clue, and I might consider to go to the village of the white clan, which Shinha had talked about. But for the time being, Yuusuke decided to wait for Zeshald to come back and discuss with him about Gazzetta, Sun and the evil god.

In a room of the council halls, as Zeshald “handed” the sacred treasure to Risha, she showed a half relieved and half puzzled expression. After completing the takeover procedures, Zeshald visited her to return the sacred treasure and to retire from being an entourage, in order to return home to Fonclanc.

“Your Majesty from now on will face a lot of difficulties, this sacred treasure might serve some help to you.”(Zeshald)
“Really, is it really alright? And….”(Risha)

Zeshald had first declared that he will return home once things have settled down, on the contrary, Risha felt jealous in her heart. Prior to the meeting which will be conducted at Deernook fortress at a later date, she had to prepare to be confronted with whatever request that will come from King Esvobus.

“There isn’t a need to worry, Fonclanc neither wants the destruction of Blue Garden nor to turn it into a puppet.”(Zeshald)
“Nevertheless, I will never introduce the caste system into this country, understand?”(Risha)

It is a fact that Izapnar had strongly provoked Fonclanc to abolished its ranking system, now it might happen in the reverse, coming back towards Blue Garden as a demand. Considering the history of the number of damages that were inflicted, they might be forced into situation to inevitably compromise.

“In the talks, you will not be pressured into the ranking system, at any rate this king isn’t an ambitious person, he just wishes to be good allies. For example, if Blue Garden were to have plans to increase their power, he would sit there and do nothing about it, that’s the kind of person he is.”(Zeshald)

Zeshald laughed out loud while saying so in order to lighten the mood which had stiffened. Risha began showing a blatant expression of relief while her 2 ladies-in-waiting showed signs of anxiousness,.

“Well, isn’t it good to have this kind of king around? Such antithesis Kings exist as well.”(Zeshald)

As the topic changed and turned towards the King of Gazzetta, Shinha, Risha’s facial expression immediately stiffened again. The world, which Shinha wanted to create, is one where the relationship of the Divine art users and the [Artless] were reversed. The might of Gazzetta is currently unknown, but they have enough power for people to discern that they have forces to bring into a battlefield.

“Someday~~there might come a day where you and him will have to decide….”
“What, I don’t think it would be that pessimistic?”

At the very least, despite his ambitious realization to power and presence, right now he is striving for peace. Zeshald also explained, that unexpectedly he might be convinced into coexistence and co-prosperity. Also he did not want to extend into the details regarding the Evil god.

“I hope to paint the best outcome, which will not neglect the day to day efforts that was placed.”(Zeshald)
Different ideologies of working hand in hand together, as it isn’t wrong to follow an Ideal that isn’t the same. Zeshald left these words to the queen as he walked out of the audience room.

After coming out into the hallway of the central block, as Zeshald was walking towards the exit of the council halls, he stopped as he felt a familiar divine arts wave. He felt a sign of life from the Supreme leader's office, which should have been empty right now.

The dark office which lights have went out. A flag of Blue Garden hanging in the back wall, and the big office desk right in front of it. An Isolated shadowy figure could be seen standing in front of the desk, as Zeshald called out to it.

"What are you looking for over there?"(Zeshald)
"....."

The lady who should have been imprisoned in an accommodation facility in another location, slowly turned around and looked back.

"Izapnar and Volmes is no longer here you know?"(Zeshald)
"....."

Belushya hung her head down in silence. As she came here to report her failure in her mission and the person to report to wasn't here anymore. She had lost her place, as the organization is gone.

".....I have lost my place to return to."(Belushya)
"Hmmm....."(Zeshald)

Zeshald took the hand of Belushya who was standing alone in the unmanned office and he headed towards the audience room which he had just left. Right now, Risha should still be there. The moment Zeshald touched her hand, Belushya's body trembled in surprise, as she was being docily dragged along.

"It seems like you got back the senses of your body. Now I'll give you another choice."(Reshald)
"....."

It's been a long time since Belushya had remember the warmth feeling of someone's hand. She hoped that this feeling would continue forever.

At the entrance of the Council hall, Zeshald met face to face with his disciple.
"Ah, Instructor Zeshald"(Plausha)
"Oh, Plausha."(Zeshald)

Her previous dark expression had disappeared and now her natural clear and bright look could be seen. It seems that since the time she had a talk with Yuusuke on top of the Great Wall after the subjugation of the council house, she was able to finally organize her feelings.

“Are you returning to your home country now?”(Plausha)
“Hmm, to stop in the middle of my teaching, I’m sorry.”(Zeshald)
“No, Instructor’s teachings are very helpful.”(Plausha)

And at that rate, they slowly walked up towards the carriage stand of Paula, where they finally said their goodbyes.

“If you are coming back to Paula, please visit me.”(Plausha)
“Hohoho, If you’re passing by Fonclanc, come visit me in the village that I live in.”(Zeshald)
“Yes, at that time, please take care of me.”(Plausha)

Plausha readily answered Zeshald’s question with exact meaning to his words. From now on, whether the policies of Queen Risha might cause a negative impact on Blue Garden is unknown, but one will expect a huge change in the things to come.

Izapnar classified the [Artless] as demi-humans, placing them as an existence that is to be absolutely oppressed by the system, as there were countries dominated by abilities users who forced them into manual labour in order to reduce the resentment of its people and to divert the dissatisfaction.

Those who understand the efficiency of the meritocracy system and could make use of it will obtain a productivity and national power comparable to major countries.

From now on, the manual labour force obligation might ease up, there will also be an expected increase in commoner divine art user refugees. The change in treatment towards the [Artless], that which is different from the 4 great gods faith, will be expected to become popular through exchanges with other countries.

“Well then, stay healthy.”(Zeshald)
“Yes, Instructor take care of yourself too.”(Plausha)

Thus, the top-secret mission that was secretly entrusted over the years to Zeshald by King Esvobus, was finally completed.

31. From Now On

After retreating from Blue Garden, the White Sword cavalry of Gazzetta returned to the military town in the hinterlands and were performing the training drills. This town was different from the white clan village,

where only the royalty and those close to them gathered. It was a town of the common people of the white clan.

“Your highness, there was a message about the activity of the Nossentes infiltration force from within the capital.” (Officer)
“Fmph, so they were watching the conflict between Fonclanc and Blue Garden after all” (Shinha)
“Should we reinforce the border security?” (Officer)
“We are at a clear disadvantage. Continue monitoring the situation after withdrawing the defensive line slightly back. If anyone crosses the border, arrest them immediately.” (Shinha)

Even if they knew about the existence of the evil god, the warriors of Gazzetta were not able to achieve any victories in their recent battle, although, from what happened during the battle, the outcome was satisfactory as they were able to get a rough grasp of the power of the evil god. If there was something to be unsatisfied about, it was the fact that they were completely unprepared to become prisoners of war and placed themselves in the mercy of the militias of the Blue Garden that they were looking down on. Because Yuusuke was there, Shina also had to restrain himself from acting too rashly. Although he had witnessed the strength of the evil god’s power before, he was not sure if Yuusuke had any other cards in his hand. As expected, provoking the evil god into that situation was a poor decision.

On the surface, for the sake of keeping its appearance, Gazzetta pretended to adopt the caste system in the cities where divine art users lived. That was necessary to seamlessly merge into this world while striving for the goal of the white clan behind the scenes. As the white clan was the core organization in Gazzetta, they had to remain in the background and had difficulties moving in the open, so they also had to resort to peaceful actions.

During this war, Gazzetta openly announced to the entire world about the existence of the white clan and, if the evil god had not interfered, they would have grasped victory against the divine arts user’s armies. Although that was the primary goal of the battle, the actual results were anything but what they expected. The results of the war were like a bonus, while the actions of the reconciliation faction were completely restricted.

“Although I did not expect for Yuusuke to react this quickly. We should hurry up with the recapturing of the Nossente’s capital.” (Shinha)

The city that was currently a capital of Nossentes used to be a gigantic fortress of the white clan. However, that was around two thousand years ago. The white clan was chased over into the area that became a nation, called Gazzetta. But during its peak, the white clan was a gigantic empire that spanned over half of Kaltcio.

“It would be great to fulfill the desire of our clan during this generation…” (Shinha)
“The current evil god is sympathizing with artless. He will definitely support our cause.” (Officer)
“It would be nice if that were the case,” replied Shinha, returning a light smile to the officer who tried to encourage him. He saddled his horse and departed towards the village of the white clan.

***

After leaving Paula, Zeshald dropped by the palace to report about the completion of his duty. The king was very grateful for Zeshald’s duties and Violet insisted that the old man stay over at the palace for the night

before returning to Rufk. Thus, Zeshald returned to the village on the thirteenth day of Zalnar's month of fire.

"Welcome back, Zeshald sensei! …and who might you be?" (Villager)
"Long time no see, sensei. … is that the elite troupe uniform?" (Villager 2?)
"Oh, both of you seem to be doing good." (Zeshald)
"… Hello." (Zeshald's entourage)

"Zeshald sensei had brought a beautiful woman from the Blue Garden!" a happy voice echoed throughout the village, announcing Zeshald's return as a woman suddenly spoke in a friendly voice.

"… my name is Belushya." (Belushya)

On their day of departure from Blue Garden, after meeting the queen, Zeshald visited Belushya, who was loitering in the empty office. After giving her a choice between remaining in Blue Garden and serving the queen or returning along with him to Fonclanc, Belushya chose the latter.
Currently, the troupe leader Volmes was missing along with some troupe members. It was decided that keeping her locked up in an isolation cell would be an undesirable decision, as she wielded the strength to simply break out of a prison cell. Knowing the full extent of her abilities and her past, she was deemed to be a dangerous existence.

Presented with a choice of serving her master or starting a new, tranquil life with Zeshald, Belushya chose the latter. She told herself that she got tired of a lifestyle of hunting other people down and hiding herself.

"If she was able to kill using the power of the healing arts, she will certainly be able to employ her freezing art to heal people." (Zeshald)

As she was very familiar with the human body structure, Belushya would make a fine assistant for him. Using this reasoning, Zeshald had obtained permission from Rishause to take Belushya away. As for Belushya herself, she did not have any qualms regarding living in an artless village.

***

After a brief ruckus, the villagers returned back to their daily work and chores. Zeshald sighed, acknowledging advice from Yuusuke stating how hard it is to suddenly return after a long time away from home, which he remembered as he was relaxing on his sofa for the first time in many, many days.

"Shinha, the king of Gazzetta, eh…? the white clan's village, with a history of over three thousand years, that's truly a sight I would like to see." (Zeshald)
"I would also love to visit it, in order to know more about the role of the evil god." (Yuusuke)

Belonging to the royal knight's corps, Yuusuke was at no position to come and go as he pleased. If he left, trouble, such as Sun's kidnapping, may very well happen again.
While having Zeshald and Belushya around was reassuring, it did not mean that they would be able to guard her all day every day. Moreover, locking Sun within the village would be hard on the poor girl as well. And if the enemy decided to go all out, Yuusuke was sure that in the end, coming out on top would be difficult.

"If that happens, you would probably abandon your position at the palace and rush to save Sun." (Zeshald)
"Well, maybe Violet would then somehow gain permission for the mission towards Gazzetta." (Yuusuke)

That said, although Shinha himself did not seem to be hostile, and the country he was living in seemed rough, it was not clear on how much he knew about the evil god, which made them (Yuusuke and co.) feel uneasy.
If this was a game, to draw out the powers of an evil god–… and similar events would require those close to the protagonist to– … and similar developments to occur.

“Honestly, if something were to happen to Sun because of the evil god or something, I would not watch idly.” (Zeshald?)
“Forgive me.” (Yuusuke?)

Zeshald replied with a joke to what Yuusuke said half joking, but in truth, in their deepest thought they both held thoughts such as “Would I be able to hold back from the destruction of the world?” The topic of their discussion, Sun, was silently sitting alongside Belushya, who was silently sipping her tea, with a blank look on her face.

“Then, what about … sheltering her within Sanc Adiet?” (Zeshald)
“In the city… But the artless district isn’t any different.” (Yuusuke)
“No no, in the noble’s district. You still have not gotten the rewards for your recent deeds have you?” (Zeshald)

When Zeshald had stopped by the palace, there were discussions on how to reward Yuusuke for his latest achievements. As no conclusion was reached, it was decided to let the person himself decide on the matter.

“If you would ask for a residence in the noble’s district, Sun could live there and there would be no way for those guys from Gazzetta to interfere.” (Zeshald)

Thanks to Zeshald, ever since then, Yuusuke was looked to be as someone who was brought up by the artless. Although some might think that way, people who would at most say “he has his circumstances,” but no one would raise an eyebrow if he were to allow an artless girl to live in his residence.
The main mission of the darkness god corps was to patrol the commoner district, lending an ear to what the citizens have to say. As they were patrolling the district every day and spent time walking with the inhabitants, it also helped to alleviate any uneasy thoughts from forming.
As he (Zeshald?) told Violet regarding Sun’s situation when he was called to the palace, there were a lot of palace officials who were acquaintance with the situation. In any case, if Yuusuke had to leave the city on a mission, Sun would be given a duty of being princess Violet’s playmate thus moving to live in the palace.

“Hmmm… buuut what does Sun think about it?” (Yuusuke)
“I- if Yuusuke san is okay with it, I am not against it…” (Sun)

Although Yuusuke tried to shoot this proposition down basing on Sun’s still present fear of the divine arts users, problems that she would have to face as she changed the living environment, and the various considerations that should be done when leaving the village and moving up to the city, Sun was unexpectedly positive about this change and did not seem to be emotionally strained.

“Are you okay with that?” (Yuusuke)
“Yes, after all… Yuusuke will not be inconvenienced with me (anymore), besides…” (Sun)

“Teacher seems to have found a new reliable assistant so I can leave with my mind in peace,” Sun’s reply seems to have changed the atmosphere in the room, as Zeshald scratched his cheek while Belushya (blushed slightly) as if the heat of the tea got to her (head).

“Mm, I understand.” (Yuusuke)
“… somehow it feels like various misunderstandings were reached here.” (Zeshald)

Since Yuusuke had to leave for the palace tomorrow, he had Sun contact him as soon as she finished her preparations to move into the city. Although Zeshald’s protests were ignored, that evening they celebrated Yuusuke’s promotion and Zeshald’s return that also doubled as Belushya’s welcome party.

***

That night.

“Oh, Sun?” (Yuusuke)
“Yuusuke san, are you still awake?” (Sun)
“I spoke to you first, didn’t I?” (Yuusuke)
giggles “Is that so?” (Sun)

Yuusuke spotted Sun sitting in the garden, looking into the darkness, called out to the white haired girl and sat beside her. The clouds over them were yellowish instead of their usual gray under the moonlight, as they flowed through the starry sky.

“So you are feeling anxious?” (Yuusuke)
“No, that’s not it… I was just thinking that I really can’t do anything by myself.” (Sun)

Sun was working as the village doctor’s assistant since the day her parents had died when she was still a child. Although she had spent her days in peace, she understood that she was not much of a use as an assistant.
Although Zeshald had been giving her a purpose in life and a place to call home, she could not act as a spoiled child forever. Belushya’s arrival, as well as Gazzetta’s issues, became a new starting point for Sun. She had similar thoughts about herself before so she wanted to reflect on her future for a while.

“But, if it continues like this, I will end up behaving like a spoiled child at Yuusuke san’s place” (Sun)
“Hmm, so you are looking at it that way?” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke thought about Sun’s self-confidence. She desired a purpose in life to feel that she was being useful and had a place for herself. Yuusuke became worried if he would be able to prepare her, no not prepare, but provide her with it using any and all means necessary.

“Ah, I am so sorry, I am speaking about strange things. I have troubled you again, didn’t I?” (Sun)
“No, not at all. That is not the case. I have recently stepped up to the position where I have subordinates myself. It is a good opportunity (for me?) to think about it.” (Yuusuke)

Although Yuusuke had been swift to rely on his subordinates on the battlefield, he still was not accustomed to ordering them during the time of peace. In order to make himself grow, he came up with an idea to provide Sun with the place of her own that would suit her capabilities.

“…is it really okay with you?” (Sun)
“Well, I myself am at a position where I am relying solely on Violet’s kindness, so don’t hold your hopes up too much.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke said the words that Sun hoped someone would sometime say to her – “let’s become adults/grow up together!”

“Yuusuke san…” (Sun)

Happy to have finally sorted out her feelings, Sun looked at Yuusuke with eyes, wet from joy.
Without any ulterior motives the two of them only looked at each other under the moonlight.

***

“Why aren’t those two kissing?!” (Bahana)
“Just give them some time, for their feelings to grow.” (Zeshald)

Zeshald had joined Bahana for a night’s bottle of fruit wine, as they watched over the two youngsters from under the shadow of the bushes, near the window.

32. Ghost of the Middle Class District (Part 1)

Having returned to the palace from Rufk, Yuusuke explained Sun’s circumstances to Violet and obtained her approval. Krielov also had no objections and gave his written approval. Due to the construction of the Deernook fortress and the exemplary service during the Paula incident, Yuusuke’s request for permission to construct a residence in the noble’s district was approved without any issues.

As soon as the arrangements were completed, he would be ready to welcome Sun. During his time between his duties and ordinary tasks, Yuusuke was preoccupied with thinking of any additional measures that would help Sun. As he was thinking of Sun, it occurred to himself that he could also improve his own ability. (TN: took him only 31 chapters ><)

“Can I really do it?” (Yuusuke)

In the [Item Customization Creation System] that was the basis for his customize create ability, there was a so called gimmicks feature that worked along the status and shape customization.
It was a function that was used primarily to create vanity items, such as wings that sprouted from your back. Although they looked real, it was an item that was made for enjoyment and display and did nothing aside from displaying the flapping motion. (TN: the ability itself is called gimmick feature/motion creation thus i will use gimmick for the ability itself and motion items for the item type. Blame the author for the confusing names~)

According to the game, one could add these features by consuming customization points and there were some players in the game that had become [gimmick artisans]. These players created elaborate gimmicks (gimmick data) and were trading it through uploading and similar means. (TN: either item RMT or game

model/addon trade)
As Yuusuke had used almost all of his customization points to strengthen his equipment, he did not have a lot of experience in creating vanity items. Thus it occurred to him that he should try creating motion items should he come upon suitable base materials.

“If it actually worked out, it would be pretty interesting…” (Yuusuke)

In order to test his ability Yuusuke procured a toy wooden horse and a toy wagon that were of a suitable size to be joined together. He the remodeled each of the wheels of the carriage and the horse with gimmick customization to make them move on their own.
Although he was able to see the motion of the objects within the game screen that usually showed the schematics of the customized object, there was no practical use for such customization. However, although it was just an entertainment function in the game, the customization that made the wheels move on their own was actually a pretty advanced feature in this world.

“This actually has a lot of potential.” (Yuusuke)

It was impossible to make the items perform complex movements, but several simple movements could be joined together. Yuusuke also added an on/off switch, like the one used in the elevators, for his convenience and he imagined his room overflowing with high tech gadgets while he was doing that.
One of the limits of this customization was that the speed of movement could not be reset once the customization was complete. Yet it might be too dangerous for a vehicle to be moving too fast.

“Yuusuke! Are you awake? Whoa! What is that?” (Violet)
“… is it befitting of a princes to openly show her surprise like that?” (Yuusuke)

Violet barged into Yuusuke’s room as she usually did, kicking the door flying open without knocking… and froze in amazement as she saw a toy carriage running in circles atop of Yuusuke’s bed.
Divine arts craftsman could also create items that could move on their own, however for a wooden horse to display such vivid motions and move at the speed of a person, walking at a fast pace, was something the princess saw for the first time in her life.

“That scared me, I thought I saw a ghost.” (Violet)
“Why did you think of a ghost?” (Yuusuke)
“Uhm… actually —“ (Violet)

Violet began telling Yuusuke about her real reason of barging into his room as she picked up the moving toy and closely inspected it.

There were rumors of a ghost crawling out of the underground city of Sanc Adiet every night. (TN: for explanation on underground city read chapter 4) The rumors remained rumors for a while, however recently additional rumors emerged about hearing human wails or children disappearing between the sunset and the dawn.
There were also stories about a person dressed in old style clothes that enters an alleyway with no exit only to disappear there.

“So Sanc Adiet has a ghost problem?” (Yuusuke)
“That’s right, however as the rumor has not been confirmed yet, the knights have not yet been ordered to deal with the issue.” (Violet)

“So, you came to me to do an investigation on it?” (Yuusuke)
“That’s right~” (Violet)

Nodding, Violet showed a thrilled smile. At least it seemed that the ghost was not of an aggressive kind.

“So, this is a dispatchment order for the darkness god corps!” (Violet)
“Yeah, yeah~” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke carelessly replied to Violet and headed towards the corps common room.
Violet followed Yuusuke for a while until she got caught by Krielov, who took her away telling her that it was time for her studies. Apparently, Violet had tried to use this issue for the sake of running away from her duties.

***

“A ghost you say? I remember that there were rumors several years ago about a voice that could be heard in places without humans.” (Shaheed?)
“That reminds me, I have heard of some rumors similar to that in the middle class district.” (Fonke)
“There were certainly rumors like that some time ago. Whether it is a ghost or not, that might be the cause of this rumor.” (Vermeer)
“I haven’t heard much about it in the commoner or the artless districts, but… those that went to the middle class district for their cleanup duties have certainly mentioned having heard such rumors.” (Isotta)

When Yuusuke talked to his subordinates in the meeting room, it seemed that everyone in the darkness god corps have at least heard of this rumor once. Soldiers from the other corps also seemed to have heard one thing or another about the ghost, especially those who had been living in the middle class district.

“So, middle class district it is? What about you, Aisha, have you heard anything about it?” (Yuusuke)
“Eh?! I-I am not interested… in these kind of things so…” (Aisha)

Somehow Aisha’s reaction was very obvious. Yuusuke, not wanting to push further, continued on in a gentle voice.

“Then let’s start by going out into the city and checking the places where the voice was heard at.” (Yuusuke)

Having inspected the entire city structure in his customization menu, Yuusuke expected that the origin of the voice would be a breeze flowing through crevices and cracks between the surface and the underground portion of the city.

[“It’s the sound of the wind or echo of the voices of people talking somewhere else.”] (Yuusuke)

“Aisha, do you want to remain on standby?” (Yuusuke)
“N-no! I am alright, I’ll go with you!” (Aisha)
“Is that so? Well I don’t believe that it would be something silly like an unnatural phenomenon. Most likely it’s just a natural event that got blown up by people’s imagination and fear.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke was thinking that it is not necessary to push yourself if one is overtaken by fear, but the diligent Aisha could not allow herself to forfeit her duties due to personal reasons and made Yuusuke change his mind. The youth, remembering his life in modern japan and basing hit logic on scientific facts, believed that

there was nearly no chance that an actual ghost was the cause for this rumor and tried his best to calm Aisha down, but… (TN: Yuusuke pls… you are in an alternate world, had your soul stolen from your body, and now you tell us that there are no ghosts??? Give us a cute little Japanese version of Lily, pretty please~)

“Ghosts are attracted to water arts, right? All the night singers that claimed to have seen the ghosts were water arts users, moreover they were of healing type.” (Fonke)
“?!!” (Aisha)

Fonke once again brought up chaos in a glorious manner.

Aisha and Shaheed, Vermeer and Fonke. Having formed the groups, the members left towards the middle class district to investigate the sources of the rumors. In the meantime, Yuusuke, following Isotta’s intel, descended down to the commoner district to talk with the artless that had heard these rumors while performing their cleaning duties.

“You seem to be unfazed by ghosts?” (Yuusuke)
“I… I am used to hearing various sounds.” (Isotta)
“I-is that so?” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke thought that a communication type wind arts user was hearing a lot more “voices” than other people, was what Isotta meant when she said that. However, the “voices” were not limited to that, and wind arts users could also hear presences similar to human voices when inspecting murder (crime) scenes.

In this echo, strong emotions and feelings were imprinted in the voices, making this echo to be something like thoughts imprinted in the space/air. When Isotta froze when her comrades opened the gates to the basement of the Gearhawk fortress, it was because she heard the echoes that were pleading for death. Isotta’s face became dim after she answered and Yuusuke gently stroked girl’s green hair.

“I seem to have made you remember bad memories, sorry.” (Yuusuke) (TN: he said that as a fact, but it looked better to me with uncertainty)
“N-no please don’t worry about it.” (Isotta)

Isotta’s face became red, her fingers twitching as she struggled to force the words out. Realizing it was bad to stroke the head of a girl around Isotta’s age, Yuusuke lifted his hand. Thus, enveloped in an delicate air around them, the captain of the darkness god corps and his subordinate walked through the commoner district towards the place where the artless lived.

“Uhhm, Yuusuke has sure become popular with women lately, right?” (Violet)
“Princess, your tutor is waiting for you. Please worry about the investigation of the undercity later.” (Krielov)

Violet was spying on the investigation through a telescope, similar to those in the Deernook fortress that was bearing the mark of the darkness god corps, from a terrace at the upper floor of the palace where she reluctantly stepped down and returned to the room.

***

Darkness god corps members started putting together the information on the rumors of the voices, which they had collected in the morning. It seemed that the voices were most often heard in the upper part of the

middle class district, mainly inhabited by the earth arts users. Afterwards, they concentrated on investigating the alleyways where suspicious figures were said to have disappeared in.

“It seems to be a wonderful place. Has no one really gone to investigate it?” (Fonke)
“Well, ordinary people would not try to approach such place” (Shaheed)

It was a place close to the upper class district that was abandoned when the wall of the upper class district became higher, blocking off all sunlight. Ruins of a mansion stood there, abandoned in the alleyway close to the huge wall. Surrounded by a narrow alleyway from both sides, the area imposed an oppressive atmosphere.

Having been bad enough when sunlight still reached the place, now one could not see the end of the passage even during the day, as it was surrounded by perpetual darkness.

“You said that there were reports of missing children. Weren’t there any requests to investigate this place?” (Aisha?)
“Eee, it seems … to have been written off as rumors.” (Vermeer) (TN: uhm… wat? OO)
“… So you want to search for them…” (Fonke)
“!!” (Aisha)

Aisha asked Yuusuke about the reason for investigating this place and if there was any information, such as damage reports. Fonke answered her in a ghost-like voice that there might be a single source that is the cause of the rumors. (TN: I am sure the original text had a different meaning) The guy used this as a pretense to scare Aisha even more.

“If I wanted to search myself, I would go out into the city night after night…” (Fonke)
“H-hey, you have gone too far.” (Isotta)
“Fonke, stop fooling around!” (Vermeer)
“Fuhihi, I’m sorry~” (Fonke)

Disappointed, Yuusuke let out a light sigh. Currently he was investigating the map data of the alleyway and the area surrounding it in his customization menu. As they finally stated their designated duties, he was silently watching his subordinates.

“Nn?” (Yuusuke)
“Di-did you notice something?” (Aisha)
“There seems to be a shaft at the side of the alley.” (Yuusuke)
“A shaft? You mean a passageway to the underground?” (Vermeer)

During his inspection of the map data, Yuusuke found a gaping hole that connected to the underground, right around the corner of the alleyway. It led to the interior of a building that was buried after the former city level was abandoned. There were a lot of passages of the former living quarters like that, which were abandoned as they were. (TN: without being buried)
These buildings were different from the Volance palace that was built level upon level at the same place. The buildings of the residential areas were scattered through the different levels thus creating a maze that was even more complex than that of the palace.

Vermeer, was casting the fire art providing the group with light to proceed towards the direction of the entrance to the passage. Forcing their way through the overgrown, unattended bushes at the side of the alleyway, they found the entrance and a rope ladder that stretched down into the darkness.

“It doesn’t look that old to me…” (Fonke)
“There are clear signs of someone having come here recently.” (Yuusuke’s corps member)
“Maybe it’s some kind of fellow that is living underground?” (Yuusuke’s corps member)
“But then the rumors about hearing human voices, can they be…” (Yuusuke’s corps member)

There was a possibility that people above ground could be hearing voices of other people talking below ground. Because the layer separating the two “floors“ was thin here, there was a decent probability that people above ground could hear the voices from below ground if they were loud enough.

“Hmmm… For the time being, let’s climb down and check.” (Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke and his corps were debating about their course of action in front of the hole with the rope ladder in the abandoned alleyway, the city was slowly changing into its evening colors.

33. Ghost of the Middle Class District (Part2)

Aisha and Shaheed were left above ground as Vermeer, Fonke, Isotta and Yuusuke started descending into the basement. A rope ladder was used due to it’s reliability.

The pit hole was about 1 meter wide, surrounded by thick cobblestone. Under the ground it looked like a buried old mansion’s room’s ceiling.

“Apparently, this hole seems to be man-made.”(Vermeer)

Vermeer led the way so as to ensure that there was enough light around where we were walking and he pointed out the places where there were potholes on the stone pavements. Unexpectedly, the hole looked like it was naturally caved-in, but somehow there was parts of a rope ladder around the place, and one could speculate that this hole was probably made in this location.

Although the town is made up of stones reinforced through earth arts, it is not difficult to drill by force using the same kind of earth arts. Of course, it is against the law to drill a hole without prior notification to the department that manages the city.

“Maybe a Blue garden’s spy who was lurking around had dropped into it?”(Fonke)
“....indeed, it doesn’t seem impossible.”(Yuusuke)
“Hiii….., the second coming of Gearhawk Fortress….”(Isotta)

The place where Yuusuke and his gang landed looked like a corridor of the filled up part of an old mansion. A stairs leading down was visible ahead of them, as it seemed like they were on the corridor that was either the 2nd or higher floor. As a matter of fact, since Vermeer's flame arts was the only light source, the light could not reach places that were in total darkness.

The cold musty air, which felt so nostalgic.

"Isotta, are there any human presences around?"(Yuusuke)
"There isn't anyone around…..ah, but, half a day ago……someone, passed through here."(Isotta)

"Hmmm……"(Yuusuke)

He immediately opened his customization menu to examine the structure of the house, it seemed like the whole house has been reinforced with stone to become one of the pillars for the city above. Seemingly, one could move around this indoor passage, and along the hallway there was only one stairway leading down further underground.

"It seems like one straight path. For the time being, let's move out. Fonke, movement speed increase."(Yuusuke)
"Roger that."(Fonke)

They began heading deeper into the old underground mansion, as they came to the decision to check the place to a certain extent first and later discuss on the number of people they will bring tomorrow.

While descending the stairs, a large and open room, like an entrance hallway, could be seen. It seems that one of the corridors which extends to both sides was sealed up, with only white cloudy windows and the surfaces of stones could be seen. So they began to proceed down the corridor which wasn't blocked towards the stairway that descended further down into the darkness.

"What's up, Isotta?"
".....There isn't people around the area, but there are sounds….of footsteps at a distance. I am not sure of it myself….."(Isotta)

Yuusuke used his customization menu to confirm whether there wasn't any kind of trap planted and at that rate, they slowly descended deeper underground, at the end of the stairs was what looked like a garden in ruins.

The once wide space would have been spread out with a green lawn, which now had dried up grass, and rows of gigantic pillars which seemed to continue on forever. It was a magnificent sight.

“This is amazing!”
“Once upon a time, this place seemed to be located in the noble district.”

The large building had been integrated with a huge support pillar of the city above, although it seems that smaller buildings have been left intact between the pillars.

By opening his customization menu, Yuusuke was able to locate his current location in the vicinity. Not only that, he is able to escape this place by using the skill instant movement. Having his concern of escaping settled, Isotta began searching for signs of people through her wind arts, as they then proceeded forward towards the back of the pillars.

Along the way, there were places that were submerged underwater, using his customized skill, Yuusuke created scaffolding to the opposite side, although there was one small boat at the location.

“Ah…..there is someone nearby!.....It feels like the earth arts wave.”(Isotta)
“Like I expected, it was an earth arts user……the boat just now was made out of earth arts, and most probably it’s just for the use of one person.”(Vermeer)
“So does that mean it might be the same person who drilled the hole?”

As there is only one boat that was lurking around, Vermeer came to the conclusion that there wasn’t anyone else. It seems that the person who had created the hole was someone who is able to use manufacturing earth arts. Incidentally, although one can reinforce materials by increasing the hardness, they can also cause it to become brittle if their process is reversed, and there are a lot of architects who could use these manufacturing earth arts.

Just to be safe, Yuusuke prepared a defence wall stance, as Isotta points out the location where she will be calling out to.

“OOOOIIIII, IS THERE ANYONE OVER THERE!!!!”(Isotta)

“.....who is it?”(man)

Just ahead of them, a vigilant voice of a man sounded out without showing his face. For the time being, Vermeer became the representative to negotiate with him. He began explaining that they were from the soldier corps and since they were being told that a suspicious hole was found in the alleyway of the city, they had come to investigate. And then ~~

“Wa,What! Soldier Corps? Wait a moment, I am not a suspicious person.”(man)

The owner of the voice was followed by the sound of hasty footsteps, where he showed his face from the windows of the building in between the pillars. That place seem to be the entrance/exit, as the middle-age yellow hair man came out from it.

“Halt, your name and affiliation, and why you are here.”(Vermeer)
“I-I am from the middle class district, working at an accessories shop manufacturing for them. My name is Sorzak, this is my hobby to come and examine the histories of the city.”(Sorzak)

He seems to be aware that it was illegal to open a hole without permission, as he fearfully answers Vermeer’s interrogation. Looking at his appearance, Yuusuke tilted his head in confusion, as he tries to remember where he had seen him before.

“Ng, where did I see this person……”(Yuusuke)
“Captain?”(Vermeer)

In the dark, Sorzak was not aware of the existence of the person until Vermeer’s lights shone onto Yuusuke. When he saw Yuusuke’s appearance, he showed a shocked expression and involuntarily let out his voice, “AH!”

“You….the black hair youth who was with Mr. Zeshald!”(Sorzak)
“Ng? Ah I Remembered! You are the person I saw when I came to the city for the first time.”(Yuusuke)

It was during the time when Violet exposed Yuusuke’s black hair by burning his hood, as she had suspected he was the evil god. Due to that, the fire god corps were causing an uproar, thus Zeshald began explaining his findings about the legends of the evil god and it’s shrine, this middle aged man was the person who wanted to hear more about it.

Prior to their meeting, he had already been going underground, spending his days researching the old city structures.Thus, he did not know that Yuusuke was appointed as the leader of the Darkness God corps and Zeshald’s returned from a recent infiltration mission in Blue garden..

It seemed that he had been surfacing only to shop for food when it is exhausted, only to dive back underground to continue his daily research.

Thus he became the rumored, “suspicious person with old-fashioned looking clothes”, as he was wearing an old design of clothes that had been sold a few decades ago.

Incidentally, the funds for research was acquired when one day all of a sudden, there stood a indistinguishable sightseeing tower and many merchants were recruiting manufacturers of earth arts to make souvenirs of the tower. It was there where he obtained his funds through participating in it. Thus he striked it rich.

“Old buildings, things of rare architectural style. It is so fun studying the old buildings of the previous era, located on an old map.”(Sorzak)
“Well…..It’s good to do research, but if you do a proper report, it’s very troubling.”

“Okay, at least that explains that you are not a suspicious person. Next time, listen to what people have to say….”
“Is there any other curious researchers that came down here other than uncle?”

So the identity of the ghost in the alley was just a hobby researcher, as the daunting Vermeer began to loosen up, he prompted Yuusuke and Fonke for their opinion of who was beside him and about ”the identity of the voices”, while Sorzak pointed out to him, ”isn’t that because of the city children?”

“This place is on the opposite side of the district, now it is a place with a no longer used drainage system underground.”(Sorzak)
“What’s that? I haven’t heard about this story before.”(Vermeer)

This huge city with a long history, even the soldiers from the department that were managing the city doesn’t know of such places and problems that Sorzak had just mentioned.

“For example, the ghetto slum in the conspicuous location? In the commoner district, where the divine arts users live, the presence of such place was being allowed.”
“Isn’t that good, now tell us about all the underground entrances you know of.”(Vermeer)

Vermeer had no intentions to notify this to the administrators of the city, as he requested information about the locations of the problematic areas. Without a moment of delay, Sorzak realized that it poses a matter of trespassing and condones to the information.

“.....well, that is all?”(Sorzak)
“Yea, isn’t that good. It will be hard to examine everything anyways.”(Vermeer)

So what now? As Vermeer turned his eyes towards Yuusuke while waiting for him to issue an answer of permission. That means that if Sorzak were to find something which would cause serious problems as he examines the underground city, he could approach the palace knight’s captain to deal with the problem in discretion.

After Yuusuke and his gang obtained the information, once they reached the street level, they were to dispatch people to locations where there were problems. On a later date, an appropriate policy to apply for this mission will be made for the architecture craftsmen.

“Wow, I didn’t realize, I was mistaken for a ghost….”(Sorzak)

Based on Sorzak story, there were people who had settled down in a place where it was a relatively shallow layer. It was also a place where field singers* uses it for business. There were animals that were being kept underground as some of the children’s family didn’t allow pets at home, thus it became a playground for

them. There were also bird livestocks which seemed to have escaped from the farm and ended up here. While he was explained about it, a bunch of feathers flew pass by them.

The round shaped appearance, which was distinctive to a bird livestock. It could have wandered in here through a small hole.

“Well, in any case it will be tomorrow. And this will dispel the rumor of the spector.”
“Alrighty, ah when we get back let’s have grilled chicken.”
“But, to vacate those people who have settled in the basement….I am not sure whether to dispute on it.”
“That’s just great, we could make use of those idling young lads of the guardhouse to do some work.”

The tension from descending into the underground lair was no longer there, as the bunch of darkness god crops became like self-indulgence researchers while chatting along the way up towards the street level. When they reached the street, it was already dusk as the night sky was twinkling with stars.

“Mooh! Captain is terrible, you didn’t even try to contact once….”(Aisha)
“.....I’m tired.”(Shaheed)

While Yuusuke and his gang went down underground, Aisha was forced to wait in the eerie dark alley, and in order to draw her attention away from the fear, she had been garrulity to Shaheed, thus Shaheed became completely exhausted.

After the identity of the ghost was explained to Aisha, she immediately began nagging and preaching Sorzak.

“Now now, because he is able to improve the town problem area, just forgive him.”(Yuusuke)
“Captain….I understood, I will follow what captain has judged.”(Aisha)

“Kukuku, it definitely is very frightening, I say.”(Fonke)
“Fonke!”(Aisha)

Using his movement speed increase wind arts, Fonke escaped from Aisha who was flushed red in anger. Yuusuke and his gang began laughing at the lukewarm sight of the usual comedy duo. Sorzak, who felt uncomfortable with the current state, observed the members of the darkness god corp with a curious look.

The reason he felt uncomfortable with the darkness god corp was a strange feeling that didn’t exist with the other soldier corps, an intimate communication which ignores the differences in the hierarchy of the gods.

In the general populace, it is an often sight, but for a royal knight captain to have done this, it felt thoroughly out of place.

“The captain of the darkness god corps, is it because he is special, or……”(Sorzak)

Around this time, at the observation tower which height exceeds the palace in the commoner district, the appearance of many [Artless] working around the city could be seen compared to previously. A change in Sanc Adiet could be felt.

Although Sorzak was disinterested with the trends of the world, he could feel that the darkness god corps will change the trend of the times.

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Currently there isn’t a good enough punch line. * field singers = non-registered prostitutes, mostly [Artless]*

34. The Short Peace

“What? In the end the rumors of the ghost were just a researcher and the works of children?”(Violet)
“It worked well while it lasted. This is the identity of such rumors.” (Yuusuke)

“Boring~~ But It’s still pretty interesting to have a city underground, should we go try exploring the basement of the palace now?”(Violet)
“The basement of the palace huh….”(Yuusuke)

A few days after solving the specter commotion, Yuusuke was currently holed up in his room after he had finished his patrolling duties in the commoner district. He began experimenting on the gimmick function specification on some crap items, for the purpose of testing them. Violet was currently hanging around in his room, as she leisurely enjoyed their silly conversation time.

The location of Yuusuke’s mansion was decided, and all that’s left is to wait for it to be built. Although Yuusuke could have built it himself, but due to various circumstances he had let the earth arts architects work hard on it.

The talks between Blue Garden’s Queen Risha and King Esvobus had been planned to be carried out in the next 2 or 3 days at Deernook fortress. The officials who had attended the meeting realised that they had misjudged the power of Yuusuke, due to the sheer size and profoundness of the Deernook fortress.

They began advising the King to place on Yuusuke the burden and responsibility of a post in the expansion development branch of the city. These bureaucrats who had underestimated the presence of Yuusuke from the beginning of the establishment of the Darkness God Corps, don’t they feel shy to even make such a move after so long, even though it was difficult, as Violet is a wall that will constrain them.

The fiance candidates who don’t play much of an active role in Yuusuke’s activity, wanted to successfully control him with Hivodir’s cooperation. Since Yuusuke’s position hasn’t changed at all, thus he goes about doing his daily peace, like going to the commoner district to mingle with them and providing companionship to Violet.

It's also one of the reasons he wanted to construct his own home. With Violet wanting to selfishly monopolize and hog Yuusuke being the main reason.

"Hey Yuusuke, are you able to make a large scale version of this?"(Violet)

Violet was playing and toying around with the experimental figurines which was made to move. She could be seen pulling and tugging the string which was attached to the favorite experimental figure. Her favorite was a "Flying saucer". In the middle of the disk-shaped body was 4 holes opening, inside the openings were built in wings that rotates.

The Radio-controlled Airplane was amongst the things Yuusuke had seen in his original world, so he tried reproducing it into a disc-shaped like aircraft which was able to hover in mid air. Thus saying that, it has been swaying left and right while floating in the air.

Violet who had taken a liking to this unusual saucer which was floating in the air, placed a string on it and brought it around. As it was also pretty cooling as it floated above her head. (TL notes: LOL portable fan | ED: I wished it just followed me around while cooling me off haha)

"I don't think it's possible. Is it's impossible to ride something like this though? There are alot of unknown dangers."(Yuusuke)
"Fuee, how about that thing over there, with wheels that are spinning without a puller?"(Violet)

"Currently, it is a ongoing research, it's in the testing phase for baggages."(Yuusuke)
"Whoa! How does it work? Can it carry a person?"(Violet)

Although, through the gimmick feature the pull cart of the wheels was moving, it became stuck the moment a baggage was placed on it. As it seems, motion could only be granted as a gimmick feature from the start, and when an extensive load was applied to it, it would come to a halt.

Therefore, by adding a heavy object's weight before granting the rotation motion in order to supply enough power to the wheels, it allowed the ability to grant enough resistance to weight for the movement of the wheel itself, after that, removing the weight limit will allow an increase in power.

"It's a troublesome procedure, however the reverse has a higher safety."(Yuusuke)

No matter the cause, there should be a method to stop it no matter what, in case of causing a tragic accident.

"An accident that could be caused by a runaway carriage?"(Violet)
"Well, for example…..having a hair caught in the rotation of the propeller ~~"(Yuusuke)

After pointing out that hair standing accidents that could happen, Violet began to worry needlessly about the thing above her head.

"That's a scary thing to say."(Violet)

"Well, first I need to find a method to safely use them without a risk of such accidents occurring."(Yuusuke)

While playfully teasing Violet lightly, Yuusuke placed the completed mini automatic cart on the floor.

The entire length was about 50cm long, the width was about 40cm wide and the 4 wheels were around 30cm in diameter. He began applying the rotation motion onto the rear weights with added a weight load, on the cart was a rod-like shaped handle which was an ON/OFF switch.

“Now then, will it move?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke boarded the mini automatic cart and sat in a cross-legged position, after which he began the motion of switching it on while Violet was watching in anticipation. The vibration of an attempted rotation was transmitted to his butt.

“.....”
“.....”

The cart which was carrying Yuusuke, did not even flinch.

“Nothing happened right?”
“Hmmm”

Realising his experiment had failed due to his body weight, Yuusuke tried to step out of the vehicle, and the moment the weight was reduced due to one of his legs, the mini cart began moving forward. It was an amusing sight as he immediately tripped and fell while failing to get off onto the ground, so he reached for the motion OFF switch.

“So the load resistance for the wheels isn’t enough…”(Yuusuke)
“Now, let me ride it too.”(Violet)

Yuusuke began to think that it might move slightly if the person was a little lighter than him. While saying so, Violet happily got onto the mini automatic cart. He taught her how to steer and turn the motion switch ON. (TL notes: The author seems to wanna emphasize the ON and OFF)

“OHH!”(Violet)
“Ah, it’s was really because of the weight.”(Yuusuke)

“Goro Goro” was the sound of the wooden wheel moving along the stone floor. The mini cart was moving at a rate of a normal person walking slowly with Violet in it. Violet, who was in high spirits, tried to move towards to opened the room door and was immediately stopped by Yuusuke.

“Wait a minute, are you trying to go down the hallway in that manner.”(Yuusuke)
“Eh, don’t stop me Yuusuke, I want to go down this hallway like this.”(Violet)

Since it is a small cart and she was not sitting cross legged, her pants were in full view from the front.

“Even though you are a tomboyish princess, going out like that you will surely find your dedicated guard and trainer, Krielov, become a nagging hurricane.”(Yuusuke)
“Uuu…. there’s no choice then.”(Violet)

Reluctantly, Violet put up with driving around in circles around the room. Recently, Yuusuke had became softer towards her.

“At any rate, I made a kind of motor. See here, it’s a kind of transmission mechanism gear box that I hastily made.”(Yuusuke)
“Hmm, I have no idea what you said….as long as it is needed it is good, just make it as fast as possible.”(Violet)

An item that was too flashy was made, as the initial prospect of it was being used as a strength to suppress the fight at Paula, but now it was too late for it to become a force. In order to dodge the bureaucracy speculation, he decided to leave the structure architecture to someone else, thus allowing Yuusuke to have free reign in making anything in his own time.

This is the first creation, calculations will be needed to be made from the vehicle image for the required amount of materials needed to create a complete vehicle.

“First I think it should be created according to an amusement park go kart level.”(Yuusuke)

Balloon-like items that are filled with helium air, with strings attached to it that will float fluffily like the “flying saucer”. Yuusuke pictured the peaceful sight in his mind as he murmured while watching Violet having fun riding the mini automatic cart.

-- One of the [Artless] villages in Fonclanc had been destroyed --

It was around evening when the urgent message came rushing into the palace.

In a certain food stall where the divine art users frequent, their investment that they have placed in managing the collection of the harvest from the village was lost, as it seems that most of the villagers had been murdered.

From the testimonies of the survivors, they said that soldiers claiming to be from the Gazzetta army began their massacre of the villagers after saying, ”those [Artless] whose allegiance isn’t with Gazzetta are all enemies.”

Immediately a group of investigation teams were dispatched, and as soon as the bureaucrats and royal knights heard about it, they went back home to check their personnel assets of [Artless] villagers that they had owned by getting in contact to those who run it for them. Thus, the palace suddenly became noisy.

The meeting with Blue Garden was held back, as King Esvobus was cautious of whether the information was leaked, thus they were waiting for the report from the investigation team. The intelligence troops that was in the city were gathering the rumors standing out among the people and being vigilant.

“Really!….peace doesn’t last long.”

Yuusuke was currently waiting at the carriage pouch of the palace with the Darkness god corps members, to leave for the Village of Rufk in a haste to pick up Sun. As most of the carriages had been sent out, Violet had arranged a royal carriage which was for the official’s use.

“Thanks for lending out a hand, Violet.”(Yuusuke)
“This isn’t much, quickly go pick up Sun.”(Violet)

“Preparations for Movement Assist Completed!”
“Captain, we can move off now.”

Compared to the normal carriages, it could bring out the full support systems of the wind and water arts. Vermeer was lighting the way, and sitting beside him was Shaheed with the reins as the coachman, Fonke

was engulfing the carriage with a film of wind, while Aisha was continuously recovering the strength of the horse.

Isotta was currently on standby for any emergency contacts of information emanating from the palace, Yuusuke on the other hand was relaxing while entrusting the journey to them.

“Gazzetta’s soldiers…… is it Shinha’s instigation…?”(Yuusuke)

The royal carriage that was carrying the Darkness God Corps ran along the night on the single highway which led to Rufk Village.

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Author notes: This chapter has been shortened, but it represents an opening of a new stage/arc.

35. Midnight Rumble

When Yuusuke’s group arrived at Rufk, night had already fallen. According to the villagers, an armed group, calling itself the Gazzetta army, was exercising force around here. As a defensive measure, the fire was lit at the bottom of the protective ditch and older men were put on guard duties.

“Teacher!” (Yuusuke)

“Mhm, so you came after all, Yuusuke.” (Zeshald)

Zeshald predicted that Yuusuke, worrying about Sun, would come to Rufk straight away to pick her up.

Sun had already finished packing up, so Yuusuke planned to leave for the city straight away after picking her up, but agreeing to hear Zeshald’s opinion about the recent events, they decided to rest and talk for a little bit.

Despite it being late, Bahana came to Zeshald’s house and presented them with a late night fried meal which everyone enjoyed while Belushya, still unaccustomed to tasks like that, was just drinking her tea.

“What do you think about the current situation, Yuusuke?” (Zeshald)

“He (Shinha) seems to be trying to gather all the artless of the world in one place, but it seems to be having the opposite effect.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke was drinking his tea as he continued, “Though he does not look like an idiot who could not see that.” Sun giggled at the way Yuusuke put it.

Zeshald also thought that this attack was not ordered by Shinha, but that did not answer the question if the armed group was or was not related to the Gazzetta army. Thus there was a possibility of another influential group acting within Gazzetta.

“Whichever way it is, the damage is already done, so it will not be brushed off as a trivial matter.” (Zeshald/Yuusuke)

“I guess so…” (Zeshald/Yuusuke)

For the time being, emergency measures were under effect and palace knights were sent to the villages in contact with Sanc Adiet, to help with the village defense. At this stage it was not yet decided if king Esvobus would send an official protest to Gazzetta regarding these attacks.

After the rest, Yuusuke’s subordinates started preparations for the trip back to the city, while Yuusuke presented Zeshald with the bracelets and rings that he made. They were made from the leftover materials from what was used to create the sacred treasure, which was turned over to Blue Garden. Despite that, their power was roughly a third of the said treasure.

“As Rufk is getting an exceptional treatment, I believe the reinforcements for the village had been arranged. Still, take these just in case.” (Yuusuke)

“Hoo… these again. Hm, thank you, I will use them.” (Zeshald)

Zeshald passed one pair of accessories to Belushya. The accessories that Zeshald kept for himself increased the divine arts and physical powers while Belushya’s increased respective resistances of their wearer. Both rings also had healing and poison resistance effects.

“A matching pair, eh?” (Yuusuke)

“Hmm, what is?” (Zeshald)

“It’s nothing,” laughing it off like that, Yuusuke started walking back towards the carriage that was preparing for the departure.

“Sun, take this with you?” (Bahana)

“Is it really alright, Bahana obaa-san?” (Sun, unintentional shots fired?)

Bahana had come before Zeshald’s house and presented Sun with a handmade bow.

Actually that should have been of little surprise as Sun was learning how to use the bow from Bahana these last few days. She had no troubles drawing the bowstring with the support of the ring of strength. If she continued to target practice like that, she would be able to become proficient enough to be a hunter.

“Giving such an item to me…” (Sun)

“Yes, I thought you would be able to help Yuusuke a little bit with it.” (Bahana)

Sun was still worried that she would be a burden for Yuusuke, so she wanted to learn some sort of fighting skill. However, this very thought made Yuusuke uneasy, as seeing Sun standing beside him in a battle was beyond his comprehension.

Yet that made him realize that he was wrong in treating Sun as a weak existence, in need of protection, and made him want to support the girl’s determination from now on.

“But I can barely hit the target right now.” (Sun)

“Hmm… Let me see that bow for a second.” (Yuusuke)

He confirmed in the customization menu that he had received [Bahana's bow]. It was a common, yet sturdily made wooden bow.

As the rarity level of the bow was low, the customizations he could perform on it was also limited. As he could not enchant ease of use effects like he did for Shinha's great sword (T.N. I think, author means stamina recovery/attack speed here), he had to settle with an accuracy increasing buff. As the customization completed, the beads of light surrounding the bow, had also disappeared.

"How does it feel now?" (Yuusuke)

"Eeeeto? (ehm…)" (Sun)

Sun tilted her head slightly as she received the bow. Urged by Yuusuke to shoot at whatever target she could spot, Bahana told her "Why not shoot a fruit over there?", as she pointed at a rara fruit tree that was growing near the cattle shed. Sun, despite thinking that it was impossible for her to even hit the tree, not to mention a fruit growing on it, still nocked the arrow and aimed the bow towards the tree.

["Wow… it seems so stable."] (Sun)

Sun could clearly see the fruit she was aiming at, feeling that her aim was steady.

As she released the arrow, it precisely pierced the fruit, plucked it off the branch, and embedded itself in the wall of the shed. Mooph that were lying by the side of the shed were scared by the unexpected sound. After looking around restlessly for a while, they saw the rara fruit and started happily chewing off it. (T.N. and you just avoided becoming hamburger by that much too…)

"Oh, I actually hit it!" (Sun)

"Heee, amazing. Yuusuke's power is sure something." (Bahana)

"I merely slightly increased the accuracy of the weapon." (Yuusuke)

Although Yuusuke said it nonchalantly, for someone with skills comparable to Sun's to hit a fruit on a relatively far off tree, especially during the night was an impossible feat.

"Captain, with this you could make a group of trainees with cheap bow's rival a troop of skilled soldiers." (Shaheed)

"Gazzetta would sure desire that." (Fonke)

Although Shaheed and the rest of the darkness god corps had received similarly enhanced weapons from Yuusuke, looking objectively, they were yet again faced with the potential of this divine art.

"Then, contact me immediately if something happens" (Yuusuke)

"Uhm. Stay alert even if you are at the city" (Zeshald)

"Take care of Sun properly!" (Bahana)

"Leave it to me!" (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke departed from the village, seen off by Zeshald and everyone else, thinking that he would buy a good bow for Sun as a present sometime in the future. The palace carriage, carrying the party of the

darkness god corps, was running on the highway under the darkness of the night. (T.N. Cmooon, you are a captain and a god/apostle…. Just customize some over enchanted composite bow instead of thinking, everyone here wants to see Sun kicking some ass…)

“Well then, let us go to rest as well.” (Zeshald)

“… yes.” (Bahana)

“I wonder if teacher will inform the city about this?” (Bahana)

“I’m a retired person with an old body. I will not be contacting them this late.” (Zeshald)

In simple terms, Zeshald, who preferred a life in the village, Bahana, and the old men who were on lookout nearby, all felt a wave of relief. For Zeshald this village was something that he could not live without.

[“However, the situation this time is serious and will not go unnoticed by Esvobus. What will you do from now on, Yuusuke?”] (Zeshald)

***

— Late at night

The carriage with the darkness god corps party had safely arrived at Sanc Adiet and passed the first gate.

The city was silent, as if it was deserted, as all of the city folk was sleeping in their beds. There were lights here and there that were mostly emitted by the overnight bars and brothels. Only around these parts could they spot a figure or two of someone moving in the shadows.

“The city… feels kind of sad during the night.” (Sun)

That was the impression that the slightly drowsy Sun had of the nighttime view of Sanc Adiet. Yuusuke agreed that the difference between the daytime and nighttime city was excessively large.

When Yuusuke’s party arrived at the palace, the carriage boarding area was brightly lit despite that it was late at night. As the knight’s carriages and private carriages were continuously coming and leaving, this place alone did not sleep.

“It’s so noisy.” (Someone from the party)

“As expected, after all a village was destroyed.” (Someone from the party)

The damage this time was different from the provocateur attacks that Blue Garden employed before. As there were no evidence pointing to Gazzetta aside from survivors testimonies, palace officials were busy gathering the information.

“Yo, Yuusuke” (Hivodir)

“Hivodir?” (Yuusuke)

Having gotten off the carriage, Yuusuke’s party met Hivodir, clad in the usual fire god corps uniform along with his servant at the entrance to the palace. The way he presented himself was truly fitting for an aristocrat. It seemed he was ordered to go and inspect the villages that were owned by the Volace family.

“Wouldn’t the villagers be sleeping this late into the night?” (Yuusuke)

“I am ordered to station the soldiers in the village. Villagers will have to deal with it.”(Hivodir)

“There are talks about the increase of the number of active military personnel, these late night inspections serve as an implication for the discussions,” explained Hivodir about the purpose of the late night dispatchment.

“Thus, I am in a hurry. Good bye.” (Hivodir)

“Wait a minute.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke tried to stop Hivodir, who was about to board a carriage with a Volace family crest on it and for no specific reason had decided to customize the mantle that Hivodir was using as his casual clothing.

Although it was a common uniform of the palace corps, it seemed that it would be able to provide special effects to the wearer. Without hesitation Yuusuke endowed it with the healing effect.

Enveloped by the light effects, the mantle fell off (unequipped) Hivodir’s back.

“Hmm? My mantle… what the hell did you do to it?” (Hivodir)

“I just… added something like a protective charm on it…” (Yuusuke)

Although Hivodir did not understand what Yuusuke meant by that, he took the mantle from Yuusuke, who was holding it, saying “Don’t worry about it,” and put it on again. Afterwards he boarded the carriage and left the Volance palace.

“With this, everyone is off duty for now.” (Yuusuke)

“Thank you very much, captain.” (Shaheed)

“Yaaaawn, I’m sleepy~~~” (Fonke)

“We will take turns in resting.” (Vermeer)

Separating from Vermeer’s group, Yuusuke took Sun along and headed towards the guest room on the fourth floor. Violet had prepared the same room for Sun when she stayed at the palace before, and it seemed that the girl was familiar with the atmosphere of the palace by now and did not feel anxious when visiting the palace for the third time.

“We’re here… Then I’ll head back towards my room as well.” (Yuusuke)

“Okay, uhm… Yuusuke san.” (Sun)

Sun was facing Yuusuke in front of her room while clutching the bow that she had received from Bahana close to her chest.

“Good night, Yuusuke san.” (Sun)

“Mhm, goodnight, Sun.” (Yuusuke)

They exchanged their goodbyes, with somewhat awkward smiles.

Incidentally, although Violet had succumbed to sleep in the carriage boarding place while waiting for their return, she was picked up by Krielov and could not meet them that night.

36. Shadow of Conspiracy

The next day, right as Yuusuke was about to leave the room to work, he stumbled upon Violet, who was dragging Sun along with her.

“Oi Yuusuke, are you heading into the city now?” (Violet)
“Mmm, well yeah.” (Yuusuke)

“Good morning, Yuusuke san.” (Sun)
“Good morning, Sun. You are already being dragged around in the morning, eh?” (Yuusuke)

Having exchanged his greetings with the girls, Yuusuke teased the two girls – Violet, having her [flying plate] attached to a string over her head, and Sun, who’s following the princess from behind. Violet was wearing her usual scarlet dress, while Sun was wearing the same white dress she wore the other time she was at the palace.

Violet was not only bringing Sun around because they were friends, but because it also helped her ward off the other fiancé candidates that would swarm her, since Hivodir was out on a mission and Yuusuke had to leave the palace at the same time as well.

“I was thinking of having Sun show off her bow handling skills to me now.” (Violet)
“But remember that I am not so skilled as to show off before other people…” (Sun)

Having heard about it from the other members of the darkness god corps, Violet wanted to see the buffs that Sun’s bow had bestowed on its users. She wanted to confirm the difference of how the accuracy would increase when compared to shooting from an ordinary bow, as Violet herself was somewhat used to handling a bow.
Thus, while on their way to the knights training grounds, they stopped by Yuusuke’s room to finish a certain business.

“That is alright, however can you use such a bow?” (Yuusuke)
“No way, I would like to have easy to move in clothes that I can change into.” (Violet)
“That’s why we have come to show you our clothing designs,” said Violet as she raised her small chest. Next to her, Sun, who was still not used to the clothes, openly displayed her much more pronounced chest, was trying to casually cover it up from Yuusuke.

“Then, the main question is whether you will need extra material, like when you talked about the construction of the Gearhawk fortress—“ (Violet) (T.N. did anyone tell her about the equipping part. Part of me hopes, not. Part of me knows that manga is censored.)

There were shops selling high quality thread and cloth in the middle class district, but Yuusuke would have to go and choose materials for customization purposes himself, while presenting the palace with a purchase list.

“The user of the product can purchase materials as well, but it is best for the craftsman himself to procure the needed supplies, right?” (Violet)
“That’s right. In my case, I will not know the quality of the material without touching it first.” (Yuusuke)

It was especially true in Yuusuke’s case. Even if there was no information about the material, after touching it he could ascertain whether it was good or bad in his customization menu.

His customization power’s true strength was modifying objects that were already created, therefore it was difficult to perform a process like purifying iron from a certain amount of iron ore.

“I’m off to the main office, bye.” (Yuusuke)
“I expect you to create the modified vehicle you promised me, before tomorrow.” (Violet)
“Good bye, Yuusuke san.” (Sun)

***

Arriving at the middle class district, Yuusuke immediately started searching for a supply shop belonging to an earth arts user. Compared to the commoner district, the road here was somewhat narrow, but the walls were decorated with various ornaments and the buildings were noticeable bigger.
The amount of passer-by’s was also noticeable smaller and Yuusuke sometimes passed a guard while on his patrol duty. The atmosphere around here was similar to a high class residential area.

“So it’s here, eh?” (Yuusuke)

Passing some buildings resembling shops, Yuusuke arrived at a relatively small material store. While gems and blocks of glass were aligned as sample materials in front of other stores, this one presented itself with lumps of iron blocks before its door. After touching it and inspecting the parameters in the customization menu, Yuusuke ascertained that the quality of iron was pretty good.

“Hello —“ (Yuusuke)

Opening the store door, he heard a familiar chime of a bell that was common in the coffee shops in his world that informed a shopkeeper about a new customer.

“Yeah, yeah welcome to — Ah!!” (Shopkeeper)
“If it isn’t Sorzak san?” (Yuusuke)

***

The owner of the shop was Sorzak, a self-proclaimed researcher they met during the ghost incident.
Since the underground passage was closed, Sorzak gradually lost his spirit and returned to his original occupation of being a shopkeeper. It seemed he had used his remaining funds to buy iron ore, purified it, and started selling it, focusing his business towards blacksmiths.

“Weren’t you an accessories craftsman (jeweler?)” (Yuusuke)
“Ah, this was originally my business. I started crafting accessories when the tower craze had started. However, recently the amount of craftsmen increased even more and as it was not as profitable as it was before, I have returned to purifying iron which yields a more stable profit.” (Sorzak)
“Hmm, so you are a pretty capable earth arts user then, Sorzak san?” (Yuusuke)

“Although there are probably better craftsmen than me, I will not lose to anyone in Sanc Adiet when it comes to spirit.” (Sorzak)

As he said this, the atmosphere about him was not akin to that of a merchant, bragging or bluffing about his feats, but more like one close to that of Zeshald’s, of a man confident in his ability. Yuusuke thought for a bit and, when an idea came to his mind, he turned to return to the palace for the time being.

“I’ll come back later.” (Yuusuke)
“Alright. Come back any time since I don’t have anything else to do these days.” (Sorzak)

***

As he returned to the palace, Yuusuke went to the training grounds and approached Sun and Violet, who were holding an archery contest. The girls seemed to be on break now and have changed the corps uniforms to some simpler clothes. The girls were sitting at the table, facing each other, and enjoying a cup of tea. (TN: corps uniforms? Do want to see, manga please OO)

“Oh, Yuusuke san?” (Sun)
“Hm? What is it Yuusuke? You are back rather early.” (Violet)

“Ehmm, you see, the reason —“ (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke told Violet that he returned to consult her about hiring an exceptional earth arts user capable of purifying iron ore, producing high quality iron. As he was talking to the princess, Yuusuke spontaneously mentioned hiring Sorzak as his subordinate in the evil god corps.

“Eh, is it alright?” (Yuusuke)
“It depends on whether the person himself will be willing to join, but you are captain of the darkness god corps, one of the cornerstones of the palace’s military.” (Violet)

These elite corps were currently comprised of only five people from the knight corps. “You can’t expect to carry on like that,” continued Violet.

“You would learn of it sooner or later so let me tell you one thing, there are a lot of excellent soldiers who want to become members of the evil god corps.” (Violet)

It seemed that there were cases of knights from other palace corps submitting requests to be transferred to the evil god corps. Fire god’s corps, water god’s corps, earth god’s corps, wind god’s corps, a soldier could not be a member of every force simultaneously, so there were many transfer requests coming in from all over the place.

“Well, every last one of them is after the equipment that you provide your subordinates with.” (Violet)
“Oh, so that’s why!” (Yuusuke)

Focusing on this reason, Violet decided that it would be best to leave the search of new members to Yuusuke himself which would authorize him to invite any person that he judged suitable to join his corps. During this conversation, Sun took a quick glance at Yuusuke and quickly turned her eyes away before anyone could notice it.

***

Afterwards, Yuusuke returned to Sorzak's place once again, briefly explaining him the situation, and asked whether Sorzak would agree to become an earth arts user under the banner of the evil god corps.

"How to say it, me as a member of the palace knights?!" (Sorzak)
"Even more so, you will be recognized as an elite divine arts user." (Yuusuke)

Sorzak, who was a simple divine arts user, upon joining the evil god corps, would be promoted from a simple engineer to an elite soldier and would have to participate in military operations.

"No problem! No problem! To be invited to join the elite corps, even more so the rumored evil god corps. How lucky of me!" (Sorzak)
"I-is that so? … Then, please sign this contract." (Yuusuke)

Beaming with joy, Sorzak placed his signature. With this, Yuusuke secured a person that would add a lot of utility to the evil god corps. (TN morelike to his customization)

***

Gazzetta's mountains were dotted with countless villages that had their own soldier training grounds. In one of such villages, leaders of the white sword cavalry were discussing the latest information that had arrived from their capital.

"Is it Fonclanc's conspiracy?" (WSC commander A)
"It's highly probable." (WSC officer A)
"It's unlikely that the king is involved," Shinha shook his head at his officer's remarks.

The contact with the group of soldiers that was sent to investigate the disturbances within Fonclanc was lost one day after their departure. The returning survivor reported that they were attacked by someone wearing Fonclanc forces' uniforms, as they were travelling through Blue Garden's territory.
Only one person has managed to return alive, carrying severe wounds that seemed to have been inflicted by a highly skilled fire arts user. As soon as he finished reporting the situation, the survivor lost his consciousness and was turned over to the water arts users.

His aides were questioning whether it was a conspiracy of Fonclanc to impersonate the Gazzetta army to kill off artless people, reducing the number of potential sources of disturbance as well as reducing the flow of people who were relocating to Gazzetta after being swayed by their envoys.
However, Shinha highly doubted such theory. He felt the character of king Esvobus when he had traveled to Fonclanc to investigate the evil god. Even more so, he ordered that the old man was to return home after the Blue Garden incident instead of requesting advantageous rights or any other type of reward. Such a man could not think of using the strategy that Shinha's close aides were speaking of.

"We need more accurate information." (Shinha)
"But Your Majesty, the majority of the spies are directed towards the occupation of Nossentes. "(WSC commander)

As the intelligence corps were preoccupied with the infiltration of Nossentes, redirecting them was impossible. However the situation was serious.

"We can't leave this situation as it is… Commander, take control of the entire army for a while." (Shinha)
"Your Majesty, you can't possibly…" (WSC commander A)

Shinha unfastened his white swords cavalry's armor as he cast his eyes onto the sky towards the direction of Fonclanc. He fastened his silver greatsword to his back and saddled his horse.

"I will be gone for a while." (Shinha)

Once again he had become an artless traveler and left his aides, frozen in confusion, behind as he rode off on the road towards Fonclanc.

37. The Omens of the Wind

After officially announcing Sorzak's addition to the Darkness god corps, rumors of the Darkness god corps captain scouting civilians were spread across the palace and the city.

Due to the influence of the rumors, Yuusuke abstains himself from going to the city, in order to curb this obstacle towards his mission, which was listening to the voice of the commoners, Violet's next plan was to let him take a break from patrolling for the time being.

"Hmmm, to combine the gears and the shifting of the gear…..this is pretty interesting."

5 days after the commotion subsided, Yuusuke visited Sorzak's shop with a prototype of a simple gear box. Yuusuke isn't really familiar with the full structure of this special machine, he only knows to the extend of a plastic model of a radio controlled car.

"For some reason after combining the items, the rotation became reverse, I do not know why it's like this."(Yuusuke)
"Affirmative, I will start researching it."(Sorzak)

Sorzak is an accessories maker and he was deeply interested in the experimental product which Yuusuke had made, thus he was very willing to collaborate in the development of the motion power of the mechanism. As Sorzak's purification technique resulted in high quality material, Yuusuke instructed him on the concept of making the form, thus Sorzak began to carry out a series of Research & Development to reproduce it.

As there wasn't any problem gathering the required materials, Yuusuke and Sorzak only had to make the parts based on the image. They began to research day and night on this "mysterious power" which made the experimental motor move permanently, and had no hindrances since they were in an environment that allowed them to research as much as they wanted.

"My final aim is to make a motor which has the same speed of a soldier carriage."
"OOhh, that's incredible! It's a really innovative idea."

With Yuusuke's plans of the development of a new kind of vehicle, Sorzak became greatly enthusiastic about it, due to his hobby of researching the unknown.

In the corners of the commoner district, the [Artless] cleaner groups could be seen moving around with their cleaning equipment. The supervisors whose responsibilities were to lead them, also have been observing the state of the inhabitants in the city. This was due to the recent raiding events which had occurred in the [Artless] villages.

People who own villages of artless within the territories of Fonclanc were not limited to palace officials, there was also the general public, thus the flow of information could not be suppressed. The story about Gazzetta's army raiding an artless village was being spread around, as the recent events of Paula's warfare was widely known, the citizens all began to reprimand Gazzetta.

There was no suspicion amongst the artless within the territories. It was because of the long term stable relationship with actual skilled artless warriors, although it seems that the overall excellent physical ability of the artless against the divine art users was not known, thus the sense of crisis was slim.

After exiting Sorzak's store, Yuusuke went to check on the Artless cleaning groups before heading towards the stalls in the marketplace. As it was about time to give a new set of rings to the other royal knights, thus he came to purchase the appropriate rings.

Yet again, he began to restock materials in large quantities, in anycase he could just make shopping a part of his duties during patrolling. He also became familiar with the clerk as he always buys new stuff here every time.

After getting a certain degree of understanding of the market, there was certain advantages like the price and procurement of these goods.

"ah? Isotta, you're off duty today?"(Yuusuke)

After purchasing cheap rings as the base material, Yuusuke was scanning around the other stalls, when he spotted Isotta in her home clothes amongst the crowd. She seems to be stocking up on large amounts of food, as she waddled across the street holding a big basket. Her behaviour seemed very hazardous.

"Isotta."
"YES? ~ ! Cap, Captain!"

Isotta who seemed to be in her absent minded mode, began to panic as soon as she heard Yuusuke's voice. And then, without further ado, she began to entirely explain about her luggage even though Yuusuke hadn't asked her.

“Jus~Just a little shopping, it is, this is, food necessity!”(Isotta)
“I, I see…… Erm….. it seems heavy, let me help you carry to your house?”(Yuusuke)

“Eh! Noo, It’s~It’s fine!”(Isotta)

Looking at Isotta’s plain frankness and nervous reaction as she waddled backwards, Yuusuke began to stare and approach her intensively. Moving backwards while stuttering, Isotta was eventually cornered to a wall of the alley.

As she no longer could back up due to the wall, she tried shifting her body side ways, but Yuusuke placed his hand on the wall to stop any chances of escaping and he began to approach her green diverting eyes with his face --
(TL note: KABE-DON! Really seriously. Seems like we can’t avoid that here too.)

“Isotta….”(Yuusuke)
“Ye~Yes”(Isotta)
“.....it’s weird?”(Yuusuke)
“Auu……”(Isotta)

“What are you being so panicky about?”, as Yuusuke pressed the question onto her, while his voice was mixed with the bustling noises of the street vendors from the market behind him.

(´д)ﾋｿ(´д｀)ﾋｿ(д｀)* …. -- ara, isn’t this the darkness god corps captain -- why is he coaxing such a little girl? -- no, it seems like that child is related to the darkness god corps -- eh, then she is a underling -- come to think of it, it seems that Princess Violet’s hand was being propose -- I wonder who the hero prefers -- but then again it seems that they were all small kids -- …… (´д)ﾋｿ(´д｀)ﾋｿ(д｀)

“THAT’s NOT IT!”(Yuusuke)

Hearing the comments of the citizens at the market that were directed at him, he turned towards them and shouted. Then, he grabbed half of Isotta’s luggage, and grabbed her hand to pull her away from the alley.

“Erm….Captain.”
“hn~?”

The orange dusk light began to dye the streets of the artless as these 2 people walked along it. Bit by bit, they were approaching Isotta’s home while chatting amongst themselves. Because of the overly happy-go-lucky attitude of Yuusuke, Isotta confessed about why she was so timid.

“Really, there won’t be any problem….? My dad and my mum…. they are already rather old.”(Isotta)
“There’s no need to worry about that guy so much, I don’t think he would stoop so low and suddenly take hostages.”(Yuusuke)

While listening to her, Yuusuke arrived at the doorsteps of Isotta’s home where he previously visited. Yuusuke encouraged her as she began to show an uneasy look on her face.

“Mom, I am home~”(Isotta)
“Sorry to bother.”(Yuusuke)

“Welcome home Isotta, that was quick.”(Isotta’s mum)
“Welcome, Oh? Isn’t it the captain from before?”(Isotta’s dad)

As they walked through the cloth door entrance, they were greeted by Isotta’s parents. As Yuusuke placed the luggage that he was carrying on the floor, he saw a large sword that was placed at the back of the room leaning on the wall and a person relaxing--

“Take this Shinha!”
“Oh Yuusuke”

An attempted fist swing towards him, but missed terribly.

“Don’t Yuusuke me. What are you doing here?”(Yuusuke)
“Gathering intel. As usual this country is easy to sneak in and out.”(Shinha)

Leisurely avoiding his fist, Shinha blurted out his thoughts at the same time. It seems that he came alone, as there wasn’t any escorts/guards around.

“A king like you spying alone.”(Yuusuke)
“Fue, this degree for me, is nothing.”(Shinha)

In actual fact, Shinha judged that it was easier to move alone. It had just been only 3 days since he left the Gazzetta’s warrior training facility and had arrived here yesterday night, he entered sanc adiet through the artless street on the outer city.

But this does not mean that Fonclanc’s security is lousy, it’s just that the artless doesn’t really have a divine arts presence to get detected. By using the cover of night, the presences of an artless are completely being covered, thus the average divine arts user would not be able to detect them. Furthermore, this fella is an accustomed warrior artless who had been trained.

“And, why are you living at Isotta’s house again?”(Yuusuke)

As Isotta is also part of the divine god corps, she knows of Shinha identity. Thus Yuusuke came up with a theory, that in order to reduce his danger by just a little he came to a place where there was a lot of people and none who knew who he was. While listening, Shinha replied with a smile, ” Do you think she will hand me over to the soldiers?”

Yuusuke’s turn and look towards Isotta, as she was standing there with her shoulders trembling.

“Ahhh, my... parents! Because he is also a benefactor... like captain! So I thought, but, it’s all so sudden.”(Isotta)
“Hmmm…..I see, so it’s like this.”(Yuusuke)

Isotta was biting her lips while trying to explain to Yuusuke.

“So are you going to read me now….or is that an evil god’s art?”(Shinha)
“.....Didn’t I warn you not to look down on Noble Gamers.”(Yuusuke)

From Isotta’s point of view, Shinha was a benefactor who saved her parents life.
Due to the recent attacks on the artless villages which had happened in Fonclanc, Shinha said that it was unrelated to Gazzetta and he came to do an investigation, thus believing him, Isotta promise to harbor him for the time being.

So that was the secret behind why she was being so panicky in front of “Captain Yuusuke”. As She didn’t know how and what to explain to him when she saw him, she was stunned and surprised.

“Are you fully aware of your place(Gazzetta) in the entire forces yet?”(Yuusuke)
“Tentatively. Although there are those whose ideals differ from my principle and policies, none of them would prepetrate this kind of stupid behavior.”(Shinha)

The investigation team that was sent by Gazzetta had suffered considerable amount of damage. According to the survivor, they had been attacked by troops clad in Fonclanc’s army uniform while they were crossing Blue Garden’s territory. His aides believe that it is a conspiracy of Fonclanc, but Shinha doubted that King Esvosbus would do that. And Yuusuke agreed with him.

“So it happened in Blue Garden’s territories.”(Yuusuke)
“It did, but I don’t think Risha would have the balls to do it.”(Shinha)
「言っておくが、リシャもそんな手段を取れる玉ではないぞ？」

“Don’t say balls, I also do not think that the queen would command such a thing.”(Yuusuke)

“Then…..Could it be….the remnants of the Izapnar faction?”(Shinha)

While Yuusuke and Shinha were discussing about the identity of the assailants and their purpose, Isotta began dinner preparations with her parents. It seems like new guests have arrived. “Arrived”, more like “appeared”, as a young green hair man manifested in front of them.

“Good evening, I wonder if Mr. Yuusuke is around?”
“!”

Isotta was immediately petrified with surprise. Although Reifold had a familiar wind art wave, his presence could not be felt at all, and he appeared right in front of her without warning. Her tension was loosened up when she felt her “Captain Yuusuke’s” unique wave, as he placed his hand on her shoulder.

“Ah, did I startle you~?”(Reifold)

“It’s been awhile, self proclaimed people of the forest.”(Yuusuke)
“People of the forest - “(Isotta)

After a weird warm greeting between Yuusuke and Reifold, Shinha who was taking a stance of readiness began to relax. The distance between the large sword leaning against the wall was much shorter than earlier, thus a depth of warning could be felt.
Reifold on the other hand did not show any worries about Shinha’s presence, as he was here with an important notice for Yuusuke.

“There’s an armed Gazzetta Army that seems to be moving in Fonclanc’s territories.”

Yuusuke and Shinha looked at each other. The direction it’s heading is a decent large scale artless village. It seemed like the target village is owned by the prestigious Volace family, whereby Hivodir had went to stay over for a visit.

“That reminds me, that guy did say he was going there….”

“I tried contacting the private military soldiers who were located at the village, but it seems that the wind art transmission isn’t reaching.”
“Don’t tell me, there is a interference?”

Apparently, they would like to send a group to examine the situation, but there isn’t any “usable” forces in the area, as the main groups are all on the opposite side of Fonclanc’s territories accessing the damage.

“That means it’s time for the darkness god corps to shine.”(Reifold)
“So this is the sortie orders from Violet?”(Yuusuke)

Reifold responded by shaking his head, Yuusuke looks at him with a ‘what are you thinking about’ look.

“I’ll be informing the princess later, this time it’s an emergency dispatch instructions from King Esvosbus.”(Reifold)

While saying so, Reifold points towards the cloth door, as the cloth vigorously flung up, Vermeer and Fonke could be seen jumping in fully prepared in their god corps equipments.

“Captain! The orders of sorties!”
“Uwaa, He really is at Isotta’s place……”

The Sun had already set, as the grounds of Kaltico began to bathe in the night sky.
(TL Notes: I don’t know why the author wrote this….)

38. White Beast

With the aim of reaching the Artless village that the prestigious family of Volace owns, the soldier carriages carrying the darkness god corps trotted along the highway in the night.

“Erm, Captain…..”(Vermeer)
“Don’t worry.”(Yuusuke)

On the carriage, Vermeer had a very complex expression as the King of Gazzetta was sitting next to Yuusuke. Although he said not to worry, the ‘Mission’ that was bestowed to the Captain of the Darkness God Corps, Yuusuke, was extremely difficult.

“But….”(Vermeer)

The one with the most complaints, Fonke, was currently busy stabilizing the carriage that was running at high speed, the second one that likes the nag a lot, Aisha, was restoring the horse strength through the use of her water arts.

Shaheed, on the other hand, didn’t have any interest in these things. With Isotta being as guilty as Yuusuke. That’s why, it was Vermeer’s role to question why Shinha was traveling with them, but--

“Well, don’t worry too much. By the way, it’s best to turn off the light source soon.”(Yuusuke)
“So what you’re saying is listen to my command!”(Vermeer)

“Fue”
“....Hiaz”

Seeing how Yuusuke’s and Shinha’s exchanges were without tension, Vermeer shakes his head as he dimmed the lights.
On the highway ahead of them was a small light. It seemed that they have reached the Village of artless where Hivodir was currently residing. For the time being, they waited for the instructions from their captain, but before Vermeer could speak out, Isotta issued a warning that there were enemies around the area.

“! Some-someone is coming…..one horse, the wave of a flame art user.”(Isotta)

Shaheed immediately slowed down the carriage’s speed, Yuusuke opened his customization menu for emergency use. Next to him, Shinha took his platinum greatsword into his hand and changed his posture, ready to attack.

The sound of the hooves could be heard as the figure on horseback from the other side of the darkness gradually came closer. As it approached a certain distance, Vermeer used his flame arts to discern the identity of the person.
“Hivodir!”

Leaning on the back of the horse under the cover of darkness on the highway was Hivodir, whose body was covered in wounds. Just a few days ago, Yuusuke saw him at the carriage porch cladded in ‘Noble-like’ clothings, and now he was filled with tears and burn marks which were aimed to kill him.

They calmed the agitated horse and lowered Hivodir down to the ground, thus allowing Aisha to begin healing him.

Just barely conscious, Hivodir could vaguely grasp his surroundings. Thanks to the healing properties of the mantle and Aisha’s healing, he began to recover and notice his surroundings.

“Hey, are you alright?!”(Yuusuke)
“Oh, hey……Yuusuke….you came to help.”(Hivodir)

“What the hell happened here?”(Yuusuke)
“.....we were attacked…..the group were using Gazzetta’s military equipment….”(Hivodir)

According to Hivodir’s story, after finishing his usual routine of calculating the daily crops yield, an armed group suddenly started to invade the village with a night attack on the dormitories of the private mercenaries.

Because they had blocked the entrance of the dormitories during the attack, Hivodir and several other staff were attacked in a situation where they were defenceless.

The private mercenaries were patrolling the area in the vicinity, but their wind arts users, who were able to search for enemies, were brought down without anyone noticing, thus the first surprise attack was very effective.

“First an ice type skill came rushing in, I remember seeing an artless warrior….. and during the middle of the fight there was a flame art user.”

Although his skill is considered mediocrely talented within the Flame God Corps, in terms of firepower Hivodir was more than strong enough. Not only were his arts at an elite level, moreover, he was also equipped with a ring of flame arts which he got from Yuusuke, which boosted the power of the flame bullets that he uses as his attack of choice. The flame bullet that he released onto the Artless warrior was a mistake, as the warrior immediately deflected his lump of flame.

“Are they in disguise….?”(Shinha)
“Yes, it seems like it…..although he looked like a artless warrior, he had the wave of someone possessing divine arts ~ o, HE APPEARS~~!”(Hivodir)
Shinha’s appearance, who was standing there with his arm folded, listening to his explanation made Hivodir jump up when he noticed him. Vermeer was standing nearby giving a nod-like, ‘ I understand your feeling too’.

As Yuusuke was trying to access the situation, Shinha cast an important question at Hivodir.

“The general situation is known. Since you had escaped all alone by yourself, does that mean your men were all wiped out? What happened to the villagers?”
“Oh that’s right! My servants was in the middle of evacuating me when suddenly that guy came to block us….!”(Hivodir)

“Tsu! Isotta, what’s the current situation up ahead?”(Yuusuke)
“....It’s useless, there is too much distance between us…..ah, but, it seems like there is a slight disturbance in the air.”(Isotta)

Most likely, they are still fighting on the road, there is also the possibility that the fight is still going on in the village. Yuusuke immediately put up an emergency contact to the palace, while Hivodir prepared to rescue his servants whom helped him escape. Thus the carriage rushed towards the village all in preparation for war.

“Where’s the group in charge of pursuits”(Commander)

“They haven’t returned. But, it seems that a number of employees and the Fonclanc’s aristocrat had escaped.”

“Hmmm….with that kind of wound, he won’t be saved.”(Commander)

Since the Wind art transmission whereby a frequent report that is being sent out had stopped, soon enough the reinforcement will come from the town. The captain of the armed forces was dressed up in Gazzetta’s army uniform, and he had determined that it was a good time to move to the next location, thus he issued an order of withdrawal.

“Burn the village! We are heading to our next goal, get the pursuit team to meet us there!”(Commander)

They moved around the buildings of the village and began to set fire onto the barns and farms. Because the villagers and the garrison troops that were in the Volace family villa had been evacuated, the villa was created to be fireproof by earth arts, thus in order to burn it they had to stack oil wood.

Although the loss of the Fonclanc noble was unexpected, the moderate resistance was rather convenient.

“Yosh, time to retreat!”(Commander)

After alighting the village on fire, the group disappeared.

The small light that was visible in the distance, soon became a wildfire engulfing the area. Vermeer who immediately realised it, pointed out that the village is on fire.

“Most probably they had set it on fire.”(Vermeer)
“It would be better if we rush over….”

“Erm! Cap~Captain, in the forest ahead, there seem to be multiple units….. they are currently in combat!”(Isotta)

The moment Isotta alerted us of a battle, everyone looked towards the forest beyond the highway, as it seems there were lights coming from the fire rife. Shaheed as the coachman, immediately slowed down the carriage. Just before the carriage came to a complete stop, Shinha jumped off while brandishing his great sword and ran towards the forest.

“I will take over this location, you guys go ahead.”(Shinha)

“Shinha! OMG Vermeer, take over the leadership. Head towards the village, if it looks bad don’t hesitate to turn around and retreat.”(Yuusuke)

After entrusting the leadership, Yuusuke jumped off the carriage when it was slowed and chased after Shinha. As he had counted the recovered Hivodir into the forces, he believed it would be alright as long as they do not encounter a large number of enemies.

“So what now…?”(Shaheed)
“As per captain’s instruction, we will head for the village.”(Vermeer)
Shaheed questioned whether it was wise to leave it to their captain and King Shinha, thus Vermeer judged that they should prioritize Yuusuke’s orders. Seeing Yuusuke’s back disappear into the forest, the carriage began to increase its speed again.

“So that’s that, when the time comes please help okay?”(Vermeer)
“Um, hmm, leave it to me.”(Hivodir)

Hivodir was added into the combat personnels group of Vermeer, as they headed towards the village that was being attacked.

“Is it good for you to come together with me? Your underlings doesn’t seem like the type that could put up a decent fight.”(Shinha)
“Says the person who selfishly jumped off the carriage alone, but it probably doesn’t matter who is stronger in terms of divine arts or in a fight in this situation right?”(Yuusuke)

Vermeer and his band had already defeated users of much higher divine arts strength than their own at Gearhawk fortress.

Although there was the assistance of those customized daggers, he was also very experienced, and one would call him a veteran. Even though Yuusuke had feelings of worries, he trusted him.

This time, Hivodir was also around, so the attacking department would not be lacking, and Yuusuke also wanted to see Shinha in action.

“That was unexpectedly admirable, or are you the kind that would even use a protected victim.”(Shinha)
“Huh? His injuries are already healed right, he’s a palace knight shouldn’t he be helping too?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke began thinking about a simulation RPG style type of game, the general overall felt like a phrase type event from it, due to the reason of “the victims have escape” or “because it is noble”, with this to not participate in such event is such a waste.

“It was important to go back to the city first.” but this was an impossible selection. Yuusuke and Shinha were chatting while running, as masses of stray flame bullets whooshes passed them.

“That’s a great judgement!”
“Yeah.”

As the two of them dived to the left and right, they saw a faint figure heading into the darkness between the trees. They began to run and chase after it so as to not lose sight of it. Was the person hit by the flames or the flames was released by the person, from this distance it was still too hard to judge.

They could see a twin pig-tailed figure in maid clothings running away. After confirming that it was a servant that worked in Hivodir’s house, Yuusuke was about to call out to her, but then something took place that caused her to stumble.

At that moment, 2 to 3 masses of fire came flying from the back of the forest, seeing that Yuusuke jumped out in front of the servant cover her with his mantle and erected a earth barrier. The barrier shattered immediately after the third fire mass hit.

As the barrier shattered, the scatter flame from the fire mass befell onto Yuusuke and the servant, but due to the heavy customization onto his darkness god corps uniform, it prevented and protected its wearer and anyone under the cloak from the fire shockwave.

“That was close~”(Yuusuke)
“You, you are….”

“I’m Yuusuke from the darkness god corps, are you Hivodir’s maid/servant?”(Yuusuke)
“Me, Yes, I am! ….. Erm, is young master safe?”(Maid-san)

Calling Hivodir “young master” seems all too apparent to Yuusuke and he wanted to joke about it, but as of now it seems to be all too serious. After hearing the safety of Hivodir, the maid showed a relieved expression. (TLC notes: Just you wait Hivodir, Yuusukue will not forget this. Baka~)

It seems that she was a movement type wind arts user. She had been making use of her movement assist wind arts to help her escape from her pursuers by using guerilla tactics on them.

As Yuusuke helped the maid to stand, a mass of fire came flying from behind a tree, it seems that the whoever was hiding in the darkness of the forest was very persistent. So Yuusuke closed his eyes and tried to pick up any noise in the darkness, rather than insects there were a mixed sound of rustling.

“I want to quickly group up with the reinforcements coming from the highway, Shinha! Do you know the whereabouts of the enemies?”(Yuusuke)
“I have no idea, I can’t see anything in this darkness.”(Shinha)

Shinha was hiding the same way just a few meters away, maintaining a low profile by crouching down. He scanned the surrounding area and was in a position to charge the moment he felt any movement.

“Any foolish move is dangerous….”
“Erm, there are still the butlers and other servants.”(Maid)

The moment the maid brought up the topic of other servants, a red flame lit up from within the darkness. Without us noticing, the hidden figure that was behind the tree, fired 2 mass of fire from the front of us.

“Danger! Take cover.”(Yuusuke)
“KYA!”(Maid)

Yuusuke created an earth wall to repel the attack, but because it was focused on reinforcing the front, he couldn’t react in time from an attack on the right side. Thus he prepared to protect the maid from the impact.

“Just lay down!”(Shinha)

Just before the mass of fire impacted, Shinha jumped over towards Yuusuke and smashed it with his platinum greatsword.

Shinha had been trained to know the different types of divine arts, thus he was accustomed to fighting divine arts users. He also had experienced the power of the elite team from Blue Garden when he was on the journey to find the evil god.

After confirming the direction of the “Enemy” in the darkness, Shinha leaped towards it, kicking the tree, scraping the earth, moving left and right like a beast chasing it’s prey, he charged towards the flame art user who was lurking in the darkness.

Seeing Shinha with a sparkling white blade charging fiercely towards him, the flame art user panicked, as he threw a mass of fire blindly trying to intercept him. That mistake cost him his location. It was the 2nd mistake that he had done for today. Furthermore, this time it was a deadly one.

“Argh, so that’s it…..”

Rushing thoroughly by instincts, Shinha wore a ferocious smile as he completed his capturing goal.

“Oi Shinha! Don’t kill him!”(Yuusuke)
“I understand, I’ll leave….one alive!”(Shinha)

As Shinha was answering him, a sound like smashing of fruits could be heard through the area. The movement of the large sword removing the blood with a swing could be seen in parallel with finding it's next target, 2 shots of flame could be seen flying towards him as he dodged it with ease, while crushing another shot that came flying towards him.

And then from between the trees a gale came blowing through with a vigor and there stood 2 flame art users disguised as Gazzetta's army soldiers in the distance, where they were holding masses of flames in their hands, which was immediately cut into 2 by the vertical sword in a raised arm.

"GYAHHHHHHH"
"Hi…….Argh!"

Shocked by the death shriek and agony scream that his ally let out, he tried to escape, but he received a strong blow from behind which crushed his spine.

The flame arts user was groaning as he tried to suppressed his arm by holding his only arm left on his neck, when suddenly a chop came from behind and took his consciousness away. And the silence returned.

"You overdid it!"(Yuusuke)

Currently, Shinha was trying to stop the bleeding of his prisoner, while Yuusuke came over with the maid. The moment the maid saw the sight of the torn arm, she immediately grasped her mouth with both hands as she almost threw up. Although the man with a crushed spine was still some how breathing, it would soon result in death if healing is not done.

The first blood which was drawn had been restored by Yuusuke, the face was determined to stay the same as he judged. This was in order to identify the assailants, so it would be troubling if the state is too terrible.

"OMG, it really is unrivalled(無双)."(Yuusuke)
"Dream(ムソウ)?"(Shinha)(TL note: the romaji and katakana is the same pronunciation but both have different meaning)

"It means that there isn't 2 of a kind."(Yuusuke)
"Oh I see, so that's what unrivalled(無双) means…..fumu."(Shinha)

He seemed to be pleased.

"In any case, we'll be instantly transferring to the highway. We should check on the servants to see if they are safe, but first let's meet up with the reinforcements."

“Roger that.”

“What about that guy?”
“Let him grasp your sword.”

Indeed, the healing effect of Shinha’s great sword was powerful enough to heal the exposed spine. Prompting to Yuusuke that it could cheat death, he had something else planned. ”It’s my family heirloom, don’t try and cheat me to pass it over to you”, a Shinha-like hesitant move, but….

“.....I will restore the sword to it’s original form.”(Yuusuke)
“.....I guess there wasn’t any other choice.”(Shinha)

Shinha reluctantly, really reluctantly, passed the sword over with a huge sigh like a dying man. (TL notes: Bye bye OP sword.)

39. At the Artless Village

Having met up with the emergency dispatchment of soldiers, Yuusuke’s group was now riding towards the attacked artless village.

As current soldiers under Yuusuke’s command were dispatched here on an extremely short notice, their overall skill level was not high. They were a ragtag bunch of fellows that barely passed the minimum qualifications required to serve the kingdom. Few of them understood the important tactics, Yuusuke relied on, or danger that came along with the mission.

Therefore they have not been assigned to Deernook fortress, neither have they participated in the battle of Paula fortress nor did they knew anything about Shinha. Because of that, they were assigned to an artless village that was seemingly devoid of any problems.

“So Fonclanc is also severely shorthanded?” (Shinha)

“Don’t you think that their timing was too good?” (Yuusuke)

Presently all of the Fonclanc’s forces were sent out towards various artless villages, dotting the vast territory.

On top of not knowing the actual strength of the enemy, the enemy seemed to be a very well organized group of artless soldiers. At the battle of Paula, it became apparent that an army of artless solders was a tough opponent even for experienced divine art knights.

Although Sanc Adiet was a huge city requiring a huge force to defend it, king Esvobus decided against restricting the defended outer areas (read as “areas outside of the city”) only to those that involved the territories of the important people of the capital (palace officials, rich elite). No matter how one looked at it, Fonclanc was severely shorthanded.

“The king seems to be gentle to the people” (Shinha)

“That is probably better than a despot.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke inadvertently replied with a very harsh remark.

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“We can see the village” (Yuusuke)

When Yuusuke’s party arrived at the village, most of the buildings had already burned down and only the scalding black ruins greeted them, but they could still see some burning buildings further inside.

“Aaagh! The mansion!” (Servant)

According to the rescued maid of house Volace, the building that was burning deeper in the village was a resort, belonging to Volace family. Hearing that the villagers were taking refuge there, Yuusuke’s group rushed towards the mansion. Once they reached the building, Vermeer was frantically trying to put out the fires with a group of around ten soldiers.

The guards of the mansion seemed to have successfully made their escape from the burning house.

“Captain!” (Vermeer)

“Vermeer, are there any villagers inside?” (Yuusuke)

“It seems there are some in the back, but I can’t confirm whether they are alive or dead.” (Vermeer)

“The flames are too strong, if this continues on the building will completely burn down along with everyone inside.” (Yuusuke)

Looking for the endowment or offensive type water arts user, Yuusuke turned towards the soldiers, who were sent as his support. At first he intended to ask them to locate Shaheed, but he saw only stern, strained faces in front of him, so he ordered them to try to fight the fire by pouring buckets of water onto it instead. (T.N. no idea what this was supposed to tell us)

“Hivodir, are there any information about refugees?” (Yuusuke)

“Uhhhm, I think that they might be in the hall on the first floor. That should be the place to run, right? Rifuose” (Hivodir)

“Yes, there’s a basement that spans under half of the house. The entrance is in the hall.” (Rifuose)

Previously saved servant girl supported Hivodir’s reasoning.

“Mhm, understood. Therefore I will break down the house a little bit.” (Yuusuke)

“No problems, you will be able to rebuild it afterwards, right?” (Hivodir)

Hivodir agreed, as he understood the situation. Yuusuke smiled at Hivodir and started running towards the burning house.

Hivodir’s knights and supporting soldiers were all looking at the captain of the darkness god corps who had dived straight into the sea of fire.

Hot wind was blowing into his face and was making his hair sway. With the mantle protecting him from the cinders dancing in the air, he managed to approach the outer wall of the building and, after hitting the wall, opened the customization menu. One weak point of Yuusuke's customization power was that he needed to be close to the object he wanted to customize, in order to use his powers.

To customize something at a long distance, like the stone pillar, which he used during the battle of Paula, he needed to do precise tactical preparations in advance and execute them perfectly. It was not something he could do on the fly.

"Achacha! It's hot! … good, execute!" (Yuusuke)

Yelling out from the heat Yuusuke manipulated the customization menu, destroying the entire mansion save for the place that the refugees were expected to be. The entire burning building was enveloped in the light effect and, after they receded, the mansion and the flames were gone and only the light particles were dancing in their stead. With that shouts arose from the knights and the soldiers, sent as support.

"Amazing job, captain" (Vermeer)

"I managed that somehow… There's still smoke rising from the ruins, so extinguish them properly." (Yuusuke)

The pillar of smoke that was steadily rising up until now was starting to get scattered away by the wind. In a small recess, in the middle of where the mansion was supposed to be, several villagers were looking around themselves with stupefied expressions on their faces.

"Whaa, no matter how many times I look at your power, it always surpasses any common sense." (Hivodir)

"Buzz off." (Yuusuke)

In any case, the safety of the villagers had been confirmed. The rebuilding would have to wait until the morning, so Yuusuke had gathered what materials have remained unburnt and built temporary shelters for the villagers to rest.

Soldiers were ordered to carry out a search party for the missing people and account for those that were currently present. Yuusuke ordered Hivodir, who wanted to pursue the party that attacked the village, to stay in the village and gather the dead and the injured.

Hivodir was told that the fire arts users that were reported to have fallen prey to the group that Shinha was pursuing were undoubtedly with the attackers during the latest attack.

The remaining two soldiers were wearing Gazzetta army uniforms, but the attack strategy was centered on a fire arts user. At that time, the soldiers reported that they found bodies, likely to belong to the attackers, near the village.

Yuusuke, accompanied by the members of the darkness god corps, as well as Shinha, went down to the corpses and confirmed them to be artless who had traces of severe burn marks on their bodies.

"…there is no mistake, these soldiers belong to the reconnaissance unit of the silver sword." (Shinha)

"Ehhh…" (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke was surprised by Shinha's conclusions. Fonke and Vermeer looked at each other, then Fonke said,

“Then, Gazzetta was definitely behind this attack?” (Fonke)

“No, you can’t say that. Hmm… can’t you read the situation?” (Shinha)

“What?” (Fonke)

Instead of an explanation, Shinha told Yuusuke something similar to what he had said at Isotta’s house. He talked about an investigatory group that was attacked five days ago as it was traveling through Blue Garden’s territory to investigate the attacks on the artless villages in Fonclanc. Survivors testified that attackers were wearing Fonclanc corps military uniforms.

“What the hell is that? It’s the first time I have heard of this.” (Fonke)

“Of course, because the attackers definitely did not belong to Fonclanc’s army.” (Shinha)

Shinha answered Fonke. Somehow, Yuusuke was able to understand the hidden meaning by combining this with what Shinha had said earlier during the day. Hivodir also seemed to understand the situation as he silently nodded, putting his hand to his chin.

“And they were not the Blue Garden’s army?” (Yuusuke)

“That’s right, by the way, only one person returned alive to Gazzetta.” (Shinha)

“Aaaah… now I see.” (Hivodir)

“Eh, what’s that? I don’t understand a thing here.” (Fonke)

Fonke looked at his fellows in the darkness god corps with a perplexed face. Yuusuke explained to them the conclusions that Shinha had arrived at. Shinha thought it was very likely that the group that attacked this village today was the same one that destroyed the investigation group in the Blue Garden’s territory.

Thus it was very likely that the attackers have brought the corpses of the dead members of the investigation squad and had dropped them off near this village.

Shinha came to a conclusion that it had to be a conspiracy of some third party, who tried to set up a conflict between Fonclanc and Gazzetta. This third party was then trying to create a situation where Fonclanc, in order to stop the diminishment of artless people and to stop the flow of refugees, turning over to Gazzetta, organized a purge of the artless people, attempting to frame Gazzetta army using the corpses of their troops.

“Someone is trying to persuade Gazzetta that this is a conspiracy by Fonclanc, convincing Fonclanc of the opposite at the same time.” (Yuusuke)

Shinha has revealed that the officers were undecided whether this was Fonclanc’s doing. Looking back at Fonke, he was frowning as if he had gotten a headache from all this information.

“Uhm, that is… how to say it… it has not been done by us or by Gazzetta, or by Fonclanc, but by some unrelated party, right?” (Fonke)

“That’s right. As far as I know, such a radical group does not exist within Fonclanc, and I hope you are keeping Gazzetta in check.” (Yuusuke)

“Judging from their actions, a reconciliation faction might have a hand in this, however there are fools that would join those guys everywhere.” (Shinha)

Even if they pretended to be from Gazzetta, the country has been surrounded in mysteries for so long, that there was no reliable information on them. However there was no way those guys could imitate the color of the hair. However, it was nearly impossible to eliminate the Gazzetta investigation squad without the intel from within Gazzetta’s chain of command.

“But, in order to do that… these attackers would need to have an extremely detailed information about Fonclanc. Certainly, they would need to have strong connection with these guys.” (Shinha)

“In case of a Fonclanc/Gazzetta conflict, they would gain a lot of influence, right?” (Hivodir)

“However, why did they only deal so little damage if they have such a strong military force?” (Yuusuke)

The group tried relentlessly to grasp the identity of their invisible enemy. Glancing at the bodies of the victims being gathered in one place (except for the bodies of the investigation squad) everyone was brainstorming about their enemy.

“There is no reason to relate this with the remnants of the Izapnar faction, right…?” (Shinha)

“No, they could be able to do this. Izapnar’s faction is comprised of elite troops, right? They would have extensive knowledge about Fonclanc.” (Yuusuke)

“Izapnar’s faction, eh? Who is the one, pulling the strings from behind, in that case…? Anyone has any ideas?” (Hivodir)

“Maybe… Nossentes?” (Shinha)

Nossentes was the second biggest country in Kaltcio, with its capital situated in an ancient city widely regarded as the most ancient city in the world. The country had a long running history and was said to be the origin of the religion of the four great gods. Its political system was also based on the caste system. Gazzetta, which now announced the resurrection of the white tribe empire, held Nossentes as their foremost target.

“Hey, hey, isn’t that because you set your sights on it that they would try to push Gazzetta like that?” (Hivodir)

“If you want to say so…” (Shinha)

For a major power like Nossentes, whose leaders saw the rise of Gazzetta as a nationwide problem, creating a conflict between Gazzetta and Fonclanc and forcing them to fight it out and weaken each other would indeed be a lucrative opportunity.

Although Nossentes seemed to take the role of a spectator during the Blue Garden/Fonclanc war, due to their rapid advance towards Gazzetta it was apparent that they were steadily making preparations for the mobilization of their military. (T.N. probably related to the unrest in Gazzetta which was hinted in chapter 31)

“Ahhh, divine arts users sure are an aggressive bunch. Hey Yuusuke, how about moving to Gazzetta and we both start to working together?” (Shinha)

“So you say, don’t take advantage of the situation to try and use one of your persuasions.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke shrugged his shoulders and refused Shinha, who tried to persuade him in a jokingly tone.

40. Flames, fangs, and an underground city

In the upper reaches of the Volance palace, king Esvobus was discussing with his officials about the situation so far and the measures that they would take from now on. The heated discussion was now ongoing regarding the damage to a dukedom and whether palace knight corps should be dispatched there to defend it from further attacks.
Due to the decaying internal situation, there were voices calling to postpone the conference with Blue Garden.

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When Yuusuke’s group returned to the palace, the night was already late. They returned back to the city with the knights when the reinforcements arrived to replace them in the village. They were now on the standby, preparing to resume their patrol duties.
When they arrived at the city, Shinha disembarked from their carriage and disappeared within the artless district. It seemed, that he would return to Gazzetta tomorrow, after spending one more day to observe the situation.

“With this we are done here for today. Good work, everyone.” (Yuusuke)
“Thanks, you too, captain.” (Vermeer)
“We’ll be at the resting room for a while.” (Men)
“Yaaaawn, I’m beat.” (Aisha)

After they said their goodbyes at the carriage boarding area, they split up to rest. Vermeer and Shaheed turned towards the resting room to take a nap, Aisha returned to her own room. Fonke seemed to be going to visit the nightsingers as usual, while Isotta returned to her parents’ home in the artless district.

“Then, we’re off.” (Men)

Hivodir’s luxurious cloak was tattered, the elegance it was supposed to give off long gone. Rifuose, the servant girl(use maid T-T) was standing near Hivodir. She tried to bow politely, however she was so weary that she was barely standing and had stumbled instead. Hivodir promptly lent the girl a shoulder to prevent her from falling.

“I am terribly sorry.” (Rifuose)

Yuusuke was surprised to see this side of Hivodir, as the girl promptly apologized with a weak voice.

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The next day, morning —

Violet, dissatisfied with the darkness god corps being ordered around with no prior notice, informed Yuusuke that it could not be helped, but his corps were ordered to act as reinforcements for the Volace mansion in the dukedom.
Still, in regards with the actions of the evil god corps in saving the Volace mansion, other important families that eyed Yuusuke with suspicions up until now had started to change their opinion of him.

It was especially evident between the families, whose sons were the fiancé candidates. They were ordered by their families to thank Yuusuke on their behalf for the safe return of the chief fiancé candidate, Hivodir. (T. N. was he supposed to be saved? Lunaris pls!)

“There’s a person from Gazzetta in the city?” (Krielov)
“He is Shinha-sama, the prince of Gazzetta?” (Violet)
“No, he is supposed to be their king.” (Krielov)
“A king came alone all the way out here?” (Violet)

Krielov and Violet were stupefied after receiving a report about the latest mission of the evil god corps. Violet caught Krielov by the hem of his clothes and stopped him from rushing out of the room.

“Wait a bit, Krielov.” (Violet)
“But now the king of Gazzetta is in out there in the city, we can’t let this chance pass.” (Krielov)
“What for? Do you want to create an excuse for an all-out war with Gazzetta?” (Violet/Yuusuke)
“Ah, no… that is…” (Krielov)

Stuttered Krielov, who was caught thinking only of a possible benefit of restraining the king of Gazzetta, who might be responsible for the recent attacks. If Shinha was right, by doing so Krielov would be playing right into the ploy of the third party (Nossentes) which Yuusuke had informed them about.

“I want to meet him too. Do you think you could arrange it, Yuusuke?” (Violet)
“Again with your absurd ideas… I think he might still be at Isotta’s” (Yuusuke)
“Princess… you can’t be possibly thinking of… at least take some guards with you (travel incognito)” (Krielov)
“Of course I am, I just have to do it without being noticed.” (Violet)

Violet remembered the ghost incident and the underground level of the city that has been closed off. Princess proposed an idea where she would wait inside of underground levels of the palace while Yuusuke would lead Shinha to her by customizing an underground passage under the guidance of Sorzak.

“So, you want me to create a tunnel from the very edge of the city?” (Yuusuke)
“Mhm, I do expect to meet you at the underground soon.” (Violet)

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On his way to the artless district, Yuusuke stopped by Sorzak’s shop. When he arrived at Isotta’s house he found Shinha almost ready to leave and told him that princess Violet wanted to meet him.

“Sure, why not.” (Shinha)
“At least think a little before agreeing.” (Yuusuke)

Taking Shinha along with him, he entered the lower class district and proceeded through the less crowded streets towards the place in the middle class district that Sorzak has directed them to. Although the entrance was closed only three days ago, it seemed that a new hole had already reopened.

“So Sorzak, you continue to frequent the underground despite the warnings…” (Yuusuke)
“No, no it’s not me… It reappeared due to a busy road nearby.” (Sorzak) (T.N. Sorzak meant that hole appeared because of the vibrations from a nearby road)

Happy to take every chance to explore the underground city, Sorzak answered with a joke thinking that this time the trip underground was not related to any punishable offence. After all, not to mention the usage of the underground space, even disclosing the information about its existence was a breach of law.

“… princess is waiting for us in the underground of the palace, correct?” (Sorzak?)
“Haha, knowing that princess it’s truly a befitting place for her.” (Yuusuke?)
“Hmm, speaking of the royalty of Fonclanc, they are sure complacent to the lower castes…” (Shinha)
“No, I think that Violet is a special case?” (Sorzak?)

“You are pretty special yourself,” retorting that to Sorzak, Yuusuke proceeded down the alley, apologizing to the nightsingers that had taken their posts there.
At first the girls started to run away not minding that they were bare naked, however, when one of them shouted “It’s captain Yuusuke from the evil god corps,” they soon put up their business smiles and proceeded to make their advances.
Although Yuusuke politely refused as he was on a mission, they attempted to fake fainting as a last ditch effort to get his attention. Finally, following Sorzak’s, who was carrying a lantern, they reached an unnatural opening in the wall and descended to the underground city of the middle class district.

“If we take this way, there is a shortcut to the palace, however a large part of the road through the upper class district will be submerged.” (Sorzak)
“Aah, it’s all right, I will deal with it somehow.” (Yuusuke)
“Hmm… this is an ideal hiding place.” (Shinha)
“… don’t disappear on us here, okay?” (Yuusuke)

Since one had to enter the middle class district if one wanted to enter the underground, it would be unreasonable for artless, who’s movements in the district were restricted, to hide here. However, since it was Shinha we are talking about here, Yuusuke thought that this guy could actually do it.

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After following Sorzak’s directions for over one hour, the group ended up in front of something that looked similar to the wall that divided the districts.

“The underground on the other side of this wall should belong to the palace.” (Sorzak)
“I see.” (Shinha)

Checking the surroundings in the customization menu, Yuusuke confirmed that this structure used to be the old protective wall (of the palace). By creating a passage in this wall they were able to enter the palace underground. Admiring the ancient underground, Sorzak diverted his attention towards a strange dull sound that resounded in the labyrinth.

“This sound…” (Sorzak)
“It’s probably Violet.” (Yuusuke)

It was an electric fan, a sound that was unfamiliar to the people of Fonclanc. Only the [Flying saucer] that Violet had could have emitted it in this world. It seemed they were close to their destination so Yuusuke shouted slightly louder than usually.

“Viiioooolet! Aare yoouu theeree?!” (Yuusuke)
“Yuusuke! Yoouu aare heeree aalreeadyy!?” (Violet)
“Yes! I am around the carriage boarding area!” (Yuusuke)

Echoes of their shouts reverberated in the area. After exchanging shouts a few more times they met each other in the entrance hall of the old palace.
Members of the evil god corps, as well as Sun, armed with the bow, stood alongside Krielov and Violet. Sun exchanged the corps uniform, she had worn in the training grounds earlier, for some simple clothes, meanwhile Krielov was staring at Shinha with wary eyes.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you for the first time, princess of Fonclanc.” (Shinha)
“Call me Violet. I am glad you accepted the invitation, king of Gazzetta.” (Violet)
“It’s Shinha. Why did you want to meet with me?” (Shinha)
“There was no particular reason. I just wanted to meet you, since the opportunity presented itself.” (Violet)
“Is that so?” (Shinha)

[“Informal secret meeting between king Shinha and princess Violet?“] With thoughts like that, the tension rose amongst the spectators, Krielov’s forehead swiftly gaining its trademark wrinkles. Princess of the flames and the white wolf exchanged a few more sentences to gauge the capabilities of the other party.

“So, you want to get Yuusuke to join you?” (Violet)
“Hmph! Evil god, a being that carries decision over the cycles of the world, don’t you think that such being is beyond you?” (Shinha)
“Wa–! Wa–!” (Yuusuke?) (T.N. Yuusuke tried to speak English here)

Hearing Shinha speaking of evil god, Yuusuke frantically tried to interrupt the conversation. He was lucky as instead of listening to Shinha, Violet hit him (Yuusuke) with a frying fan shouting “You are noisy!!”

“Hey, don’t be noisy. I already know that Yuusuke is the evil god.” (Violet)
“Hah, how?!” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke was so shocked that he even mixed in some English words. Violet continued as the flying saucer recovered from the crash and started rising again from the top of Yuusuke’s head.

“What’s with the strange accent? I heard it from Sun earlier.” (Violet)
“Ah!… I am terribly sorry. I accidently spoke of it earlier.” (Sun)
“Haaah.” (Yuusuke)

Thinking of how could this happen, Yuusuke could not utter a word. She was certainly tricked into revealing it, however it also meant that Sun trusted Violet enough to share her innermost secrets.
However the members of the evil god corps, who supported Yuusuke though dangerous missions, were also people who deserved to be trusted. Meanwhile the girl in question, Sun, touched Yuusuke’s back and froze (all red). Violet, turned towards Shinha, looked at him with youthful fire in her eyes, and told him:

“Well, with this being the case there is all the more reason for preventing Yuusuke from joining you.” (Violet)
“…” (Shinha)

Unusually for Shinha, he could not retort to the bold act of the princess. Yuusuke feeling the atmosphere around the two and being fully aware of what Violet is capable off, turned to Shinha and spoke:

“This princess is sure difficult to deal with.” (Yuusuke)
“Eh, this cute looking thing?” (Shinha)
“I don’t know about cute, but she acted like that in the past as well.” (Yuusuke)
“Your patience sure is something.” (Shinha)

Violet tried to appeal to the two guys who were speaking her down, but, unable to discern truth from lies, she could only laugh sarcastically. However, due to this, the strained atmosphere of an informal secret meeting turned to calm and relaxed one in just an instant.

“Speaking of queen Rishause, it seems that the meeting with Blue Garden will be postponed.” (Violet)

Violet had heard this in the morning as she stumbled upon a discussion between her father, his close aides, and the bureaucrats when she went to greet him this morning. Shinha was unhappy with these news. In the light of the recent events it had some sense as merely talking about the problem was not enough.

Shinha explained that if he was right and Nossentes was indeed responsible for the actions that escalated the conflict between Fonclanc and Gazzetta, he thought it to be much more beneficial to deepen the relationship with queen Rishause, who held full authority within her kingdom, as the people of the Blue Garden were surely be affected by these events.

“If Fonclanc and Blue Garden become allies, wouldn’t that trouble Gazzetta in the future?” (Violet)
“That is of no significance to us.” (Shinha)
“Hmm, you are pretty full of yourself.” (Violet)
“Because I have already assumed this to happen.” (Shinha)

***

Before long their informal secret meeting came to an end and Violet’s group returned to the palace, while Yuusuke and Sorzak guided Shinha back into the city.

“Do your plans include a confrontation with Fonclanc?” (Yuusuke)
“If that will be necessary, yeah.” (Shinha)
“Rather, you spoke earlier that you need the divine arts users society to crumble before the prosperity of the white tribe can be returned.” (Yuusuke)
“As this involve all of Kaltcio, I will need evil god’s power to accomplish that.” (Shinha)

Yuusuke was again burdened with the thoughts on how much did Shinha know about the evil god. He felt that he would have to visit the white tribe’s village one way or another at some point in the future. As for Shinha’s words that he would be an essential part in his plans, Yuusuke had no way to confirm or deny the meaning behind these words.

“You were speaking about the possibility of becoming hostile in the future, but what would you do if you were caught here?” (Yuusuke)

“I am not an essential part of this plan. If I were to perish here, Gazzetta would just welcome a new king that would lead them to the new era.” (Shinha)
“How do I say it… you would not mind another person becoming a king?” (Yuusuke)
“Don’t be so negative.” (Shinha)

Anyhow, it was clear to Yuusuke that Shinha was acting on his own volition, in fact, he seemed to be easily handling his duty. Shinha’s way of talking about the revival of the white clan empire, it too seemed like he was talking about something that was destined to fall sooner or later.
Contradiction between talking like he understood that nothing is eternal in the world yet actively striving towards the fulfillment of the desire of the white tribe did not feel right for Yuusuke. Yuusuke felt that he wanted to have a nice chat with Shinha, leaving countries, evil god and other matters aside.

“Then, until the next time we meet!” (Yuusuke)
“Uhm, see ya.” (Shinha)

Escorted out of the underground and then to the artless district, Shinha left Sanc Adiet without any more delays.

***

“Then, call me again if you need anything.” (Sorzak)
“Mhm, thank you.” (Yuusuke)

Having separated with Sorzak in the middle class district, Yuusuke returned to the palace and headed towards the knights resting room. Violet, having returned from the underground, was having a lively chat with the members of the evil god corps and Sun. Lastly, Krielov was at his desk, making arrangements to advise the King against postponing the meeting with Blue Garden.

“Oh, you are back, Yuusuke.” (Violet)
“Good work captain. Please join us.” (Vermeer)
“Yuusuke-san, please take this.” (Sun + Isotta)

Sun and Isotta presented Yuusuke with a cup of rara juice, which was the drink that everyone was enjoying. Having used a moment when Yuusuke let his guard down, while being approached by the girls, Fonke asked Yuusuke a certain question.

“By the way… yesterday in the city—“ (Fonke)

Able, or unable to read the atmosphere, he asked Yuusuke about a certain rumor that he had heard in the town.

“They say that you like all types of girls, no matter if they are divine arts users or artless.“ (Fonke)
“Ah, something about being a hero, that is a subjective opinion…” (Yuusuke)
“But the rumors say that you had a nice time with a girl from one of the elite troupes of Blue Garden on the day that you conquered the entire fortress.” (Fonke)
“Wait! Were you the one that started this rumor?!” (Yuusuke)
“They say that you also relentlessly force yourself on your subordinates.” (Fonke)
“I DO NOOOOT! AND WHERE THE FUCK DID “RELENTLESSLY” COME FROM?” (Yuusuke)
“The last rumor is probably related to Isotta, because I heard it in the street stall market street.” (Fonke)
“People in the city say that you were forcing yourself on a frightened Isotta.” (Fonke)

It seemed that Fonke had remembered that Yuusuke was in Isotta's house, when he was searching for him because of the emergency dispatchment orders. He seemed to have mixed it with other rumors and greatly over exaggerated the situation. And of course, the person himself (Yuusuke) did not found this conversation funny.

"Captain~, it's not good to use force yourself on the girls~" (Fonke)
"You should be gentle with the girls." (Vermeer)
"Hey, guys, wait a bit…" (Yuusuke)

Fonke and Vermeer were overdoing it. Aisha was ordered by the princess not to interfere, as Violet herself was just watching the bullying while Shaheed was just sitting silently not saying a word during the entire conversation.

"Why are you speaking about brute force? He was certainly using his strength at first, but… captain was trying to be kind!" (Isotta)

SILENCE

The resting room fell into a complete silence as Isotta tried to help Yuusuke out by explain the situation, omitting some key points like "he was carrying the luggage" or "it did not mean that I was angry just because I was silent".

"Uhm…. Yuusuke, if you want to play around, there are plenty of nightsingers in the city. It is better to not go after the inexperienced ones.
"If you want, I can get you some of the palace girls," added Violet, barely containing her laugh from all these gossips.

"Since you are a man, I understand that you are interested in such acts. However, I think you should keep it in moderation." (Sun)

Although Sun said it in a calm voice, her shoulders were shaking.

"You guys, CAN YOU STOP DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS?!" (Yuusuke)

It was a rare day when Yuusuke was being picked upon.

***

At the bank of a huge lake in the southern part of Fonclanc, an armed group of ten men, dressed in Gazzetta uniforms, were wrapping up the final discussions about their raid plan for the next artless village.

During their last attack a noble had escaped along with several servants. They received a report that the pursuit group that chased after them was destroyed. The report was sent by a single person of the pursuit group that managed to survive. However the contents of the report were troublesome.

"Did captain of the Fonclanc's evil god corps and Shinha, king of Gazzetta really joined forces…?" (Attack group member A)
"Think about it for a little bit" (Attack group member B)

Commanding officer groaned since king Shinha had to be involved in this if actions of the artless soldiers were coordinated with the movements of the evil god corps. His underlings seemed to agree with him.

According to their collaborators in Gazzetta, the army movements that were obvious before had become hard to read. Since such unexpected events occurred it became very dangerous to continue acting in the enemy territory.

As they could not make their decision on the spot, they opted to temporarily return to their country.

“Really, the existence of the evil god corps in a pain in the butt…” (Attack group member A)
Even if they were still new, Volmes sighed after losing three useful soldiers and issued a retreat order.

41. Under the water surface

“So then, the compensation will be like that.”

The secret informal talks are being held underground in Sanc Adiet, and the enacted date will be set at a later date, which will be carried out at Deernook fortress by Queen Risha and King Esvosbus.

During the meeting, a discussion about the compensation to the Gearhawk fortress victims’ families was also held. It was decided that Blue Garden will be paying the full compensation to the bereaved families. The compensation would be taken from the private properties of the previous Supreme leader officer Izapnar as funds, but when Blue Garden officials went to check up on the properties, about half of them had disappeared.

Mostly likely, it had been the work of the missing elite members of the “Flame troupe” on the day of the internal conflict. Fortunately, the amount of jewelry and precious metals that was left was enough to meet the agreed amount of compensation.

After settling the talks regarding Gearhawk fortress, the two countries moved on to the topic about the immediate threat, Gazzetta. King Esvosbus began the topic by starting from the recent incident that had occurred in Fonclanc’s territories, and questioned the involvement of Gazzetta, in order to gain some hints about the truth from Risha’s reactions.

“I believe that they are not responsible for the attacks.”(Risha)
“Is it because your highness knows the personality of the king, can I interpret it like that?”(Esvosbus)

“I will only tolerate so much.”(Risha)
“Hmmm…..”

In fact, it is not openly known, but King Esvosbus knows about Yuusuke’s group movement and Shinha’s visit to the city. He also knew that Yuusuke is the genuine evil god, and that Zeshald had requested the production of a sacred treasure. Even the aides of the king didn’t know about it. The information source was by the self-proclaimed forest person. (TL notes: LOL Reifold)

“Just a little, would it be okay if I talked about something deep.”

As he said that, the people within the meeting room were cleared out by King Esvosbus, and he began to ask about the personal relationships between Gazzetta’s king and Queen Risha.

“To pry into this, what will the lady do about Gazzetta, King Shinha, and how will you face him, could you tell us the truth?”
“So it’s about Shinha, eh….”(Risha)

After showing some hesitation, Risha began to talk about her feelings towards Shinha.

“Shinha is….er, Gazzetta’s king is, possessed by the spirits of old.”(Risha)

He views the white family’s prosperity and the divine arts user’s decline are two sides of a coin, with Kaltcio’s life being tied to the teachings of the so called “correct history” of the flow, as Risha explained the in-depth knowledge of what she knew of Gazzetta.

Risha’s ideal is an realization of coexistence and co-prosperity with the artless, in order to release Shinha from the curse of the white family.

“That is maybe because of the 4 great gods’ faith~~”

The Queen of Blue Garden started the preface from the secrets of Gazzetta. When Risha was young, her father, the king, together with the previous King of Gazzetta, spent their time together in the village of the white family to understand the secret about the origins of the 4 great god’s faith.

For the sake of appearances, they put to use the concept of the 4 great gods, but Risha herself recognized that the concept itself was not use.

“....that is.”(Esvosbus)
“ A long time ago, an evil god named “Wizard” descended in Kaltcio . The 4 great gods’ faith was a hoax faith that was forged by the hands of those in power at that time of death of this evil god.”(Risha)

The talks were currently happening at Deernook fortress, as Queen Risha and King Esvosbus didn’t have the means to overturn the common sense of this world. At the very same time, in the middle district of the city of Sanc Adiet, an invention of great influence to the industrial part of the world had been born in Sorzak’s shop.

“Although the 2nd stage of the shifting have not been achieved, but…..”
“Isn’t it great for the first prototype, our next plan will be to increase the output gradually.”

The completion of the prototype gearbox. Customized by Yuusuke, the gears and shafts, and all the other parts were resistant to wear and tear, and the lubricating oil also benefited from it by creating a quiet specification which was great.

As it is currently, Yuusuke made use of his customization and duplicated a copy of the entirety of it, allowing them to continue their research, and leaving one with Sorzak while making another to incorporate into his vehicle back at his place to further research of the practical uses of it.

“Well, I will see you next month.”(Yuusuke)
“Yeah, I will look forward to the research results of it being integrated into the moving vehicle.”(Sorzak)

After returning to his room in the palace, Yuusuke began looking around his room for the appropriate items. The prototype gearbox uses the gimmick function to strengthen the rotation force of the gears that surround the motor, a shaft approximately 40cm in length, is projecting out from the box.

Although the rotational speed was lacking, but the power seems to have increased.

“Ng….for now, let me try mounting something on it.”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke began looking at a reasonable ‘vehicle’, and started to tamper with it by adding a built-in prototype gearbox within his customization menu.

“Yuusuke! Did you create something interesting?”(Violet)

Yuusuke had returned from Sorzak’s store, hearing Violet’s arrival, he used his feet to block the swinging of the door.

Yuusuke was sitting on the sofa, and at that rate he quickly traverse to the front door. He did that by modifying the leg frame of the sofa with a mobile function and connected the gearbox with power-like wheels. A prototype ‘ power-assist sofa’. He was about to begin his free-running experiment.

“wawawa, What is that~!”(Violet)

Delighted by the moving sofa, Violet jumped onto Yuusuke’s lap,”let me try it too”.

“Oi oi, ….. whether this would move or not, though the power shouldn’t be a problem.”(Yuusuke)
“Sun! Come here too.”(Violet)
“EH!”
“eh?”

Violet’s call was responded by a stunned voice, Yuusuke immediately turns his head towards the voice and saw Sun, standing there at the door. In fact, Sun was being brought along. This time around, she was dressed in a completely familiar yet un-familiar dress. , Because of that, she hesitated to enter the room.

“Erm, then….sorry to intrude.”(Sun)
“Wai…t”(Yuusuke)

Sun gently sat down onto Yuusuke’s left lap, next to Violet who was on the right lap.

“Oh, it seems that it’s okay for 3 people to ride it.”(Violet)
“This is amazing.”(Sun)

Hearing a phrase that he couldn’t remember where he heard from, as he was trying to recall, the power of the prototype gearbox somehow self-propelled the sofa forward, thus Yuusuke came to the conclusion that the experiment was a success. As long as the research proceeded in this state, the horse-carriage which he had envisioned initially is not far off.

“Yuusuke-san, your leg, is it alright?”(Sun)(TL notes: Some fella posted a comment saying mister/mr is too england, and wanted it to be more japanese.)

Sun had been captivated by the moving sofa, as she recalled Yuusuke’s silence from earlier. She realized,
“Am I heavy?”

“Ah, that’s isn’t the problem though….”(Yuusuke)
“Fufufu, there isn’t a need to worry Sun, Yuusuke is enjoying the warmth of our asses.”
“EH!”(Sun)
“OI!”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke showed an angry ‘you should get off’ face, and realised it was ‘useless’ to get through with Violet. Sun tried to hide her face in shyness.

Krielov who was an exclusive guard and teacher of Violet was walking around the palace looking for her, and heard the usual racket that was happening in Yuusuke's room.

"As I expected, you are here again Princess, it is soon time for your tuition~~"(Krielov)

Violet and Sun were both sitting atop of Yuusuke's lap, while the sofa which he was sitting on was moving around the room in circles making a rumbling noise. Krielov, who had just witnessed the sight, stood there paralyzed for a few seconds. After that few seconds, he had grown accustomed to it.

"Awww after my long awaited fun~~!"(Violet)
"Don't say something so selfish."(Krielov)

Krielov took the princess and dragged her away as she threw her child tantrum, while Yuusuke saw them off with a 'thanks for your hard work' in his heart. Now left behind, Sun and Yuusuke smiled awkwardly at each other, as they began to enjoy a casual conversation.

"Have you gotten accustomed to the life in the palace?"(Yuusuke)
"Yes, but there is so much luxury here, I might not be able to get used to the life in the village afterwards, the thought of it is scary."(Sun)
"I see, it is true."(Yuusuke)

The daily preparations of drawing water and meals for living in the palace were being done by the servants, even the change of clothes were being taken care of, and one would become dull after everything is done for them.

"After seeing the state of Shinha previously, I doubt he will try to prey on Sun again, but…… since the current situation had ended, do you want to visit Rufk?"(Yuusuke)
"Well….ah, but it's bad to intrude onto teacher."(Sun)
"Pfft. That reminds me, I am so forgetful."(Yuusuke)
"And, it seems returning will be troublesome."(Sun)

Even with a high speed traveling assisted soldier carriage, the round trip to Rufk village will be inconvenient as it is too time-consuming.

Although he could use the instant transfer method which he had previously used at the Great Wall of Paula, but it requires a huge amount of cornerstones to be laid down and connected to the village, thus it wasn't very realistic.
On the other hand, Yuusuke began envisioning the potential of the continuous instant movement of his customization capabilities .
"It currently is only in the image stage, though I have the method to clear the material problem."(Yuusuke)

If the city had its structure similar to Sanc Adiet, even if it wasa floor stone, it could be easily replaced through instant movement. To come up with such interesting ideas, just by imagination, the small amount material it would appear in ridiculous amount of efficiency.

“Well either way, the prerequisite of the customization ability is that it is only limited to me.”(Yuusuke)

Currently, the research on it’s power is underway by Sorzak. It had plans to run in a bus type vehicle to carry large number of people throughout Kaltico.

In the first place, it was Sorzak’s and Yuusuke’s delusion that became the cornerstone for future development.

“For the time being, let’s head into the city to check if they have any decent things.”(Yuusuke)
“So are we heading to the city with this moving chair?”(Sun)
“Nope, although it’s interesting in it’s own way, but….”(Yuusuke)

While Sun was imagining the scene of the city, Yuusuke was first thinking about the creations of Violet’s go-cart, as he started dismantling the power sofa.

In the centre of Kaltico was a gigantic lake. Being called the “Mirror of the moon”, an ancient country which is located on the opposite shore across the lake, Nossentes.

Deep within the ancient capital city of Pato Rutiar North, there stood a building which played a pivotal role. This building is known as the God Discussion Hall, and all the decision makers known as the “God Parliament” members gathered there everyday to debate on the policies that were to be carried out.

In Nosentess, from the ancient city, 2 people amongst the Divine art users were elected to become the representative and a member of the God Parliament, and they were to be centered around the congress which governs the nation, although it seems to be elected by the general public, in actual fact it was a dictatorship by the minority.

“Well then, the report for the other time but…..Gazzetta’s forces and that Darkness god corp’s captain seems to have a connection.”
“According to the intel our spies had gathered, Gazzetta had been trying to lure the darkness god corp’s unique divine arts user to their country.”
“The darkness god captain, so called “Yuusuke”, was he brought up in the village of the artless?”
“It seems that Gazzetta is trying to make use of that….”

Although it seems that he had encouraged an ordinance promulgated to protect the Artless, first we need to analyze and link a series of actions on whether or not he is related to the artless. Even if we were to be linked, the connections between Gazzetta and Fonclanc, it will just benefit Gazzetta.

'If that's the case, before Gazzetta take actions into their hands, we(Nossentes) should strike from our side.' As the heated argument about who was up for the task of investigating the identity of 'Yuusuke' who is the captain of the Darkness God Corp.

"How about we let Gazzetta's handle with "Yuusuke" being the evil god?"
"Is he really the evil god or not, it is an unexpected outcome if we were to elevate the status of the evil god."
"But, if "Ayuukatsu" is still alive and somewhere in Gazzetta predicted this, it most likely is real."
"In that case, either we somehow get hold of the evil god, or it must be destroyed."

Like the white family, they also know about the reality of the evil god and its roles, their clans were responsible for governing Nossentes since ancient times in the form of a God parliament, this knowledge had been handed down through the generations.

"Ayuukatsu.Ikudouto" a tradition that informs the people to continue their search for the advent of the evil god.

"It seems that 'Ayuukatsu' is being concealed in the village where the white family resides, it's location is still unknown, so there is no way to confirm the information…."
"How are we going to make a move on Blue Garden…."
"That country had just been knockup by Fonclanc, it will be splitted up from now on, soon enough it will disappear."

In order to prevent the decline of Artless within the country of Fonclanc and to flow into Gazzetta, under the pretext of execution from Gazzetta, they disguise it as an Fonclanc's conspiracy that the Gazzetta's army had attacked, this was the cover conspiracy that was implemented by Nossentes.

Using exile from Blue Garden as a guise, Volmes was pulling the strings on the final stages which had unfold between Fonclanc and leading Gazzetta in, finally adding Blue garden into a 3 way fight which was scheduled ploy from Nossentes, But it was temporarily interrupted due to the awareness about the change in the current situation.

In the birthplace of the 4 great god's faith, the descendant's of the founder of the gods religion, began analyzing the information found around the Darkness God captain, as they reviewed the conclusions that were given to them by the higher ups.

"Now, about the current direction and capturing the Darkness God captain, is it viable?"
"Hmmm….we have no problem with it."

The council had decided on the plan to capture Yuusuke, a too classic strategy, which causes one person to sigh.

“Seriously, when will the time change, to call on a presence which refers to as a hero, lusting over the unknown.”

42. Singing Princesses of Sanc Adiet

(UNEDITED VERSION)

A few days back, King Esvosbus had returned from the conference of the agreements and arrangements of compensation that were to be announced and made by Blue Garden. Originally it wasn’t prohibited, but by anticipating the situation many of the merchants had been restraining on trading great amount of goods.

Now, after the announcement, the distribution that had once been stalled had become active again, thus the prices of goods began to stabilize in both cities of Fonclanc and Blue Garden.

“Hey, isn’t this Yuusuke.”(Hivodir)

As it was about time to create the next set of rings, Yuusuke left the palace and headed towards the city to do some material shopping, while passing the streets of the noble district, he met Hivodir.

“Yo, have you recovered from your injuries?”(Yuusuke)
“I was already healed up on that day by water arts, and i have been on a sick leave since. However I am pretty much alright.”(Hivodir)

“Are you heading down to the city again?”, Hivodir, who was interested in the commoner district, joined up with him and the two of them were silly chatting while walking along the street. Hivodir, who normally uses his personal carriage to go to the city, had recently began to use his feets to walk instead.

As they were approaching the middle class district’s gate, Hivodir voice out when he notices a number of footsteps from a girl coming towards them from the corner of the street.

“Well well, Rasanasha dono. You’re as beautiful today.”(Hivodir)
“Ara, Hivodir. Long time no see.”(Rasanasha)

“Who’s this?” Yuusuke asked, “She’s a singing princess” answered Hivodir. In Sanc Adiet, there are 6 singing princess, and she is the 3rd rank singing princess.(TL notes: High class prost)

Her eyes and hair were light blue (water like) color, as her hair extends towards her waist while ever waving so slightly. Her appearance was reminiscenting of Queen Risha of Blue Garden, and she doesn’t have the commoner like atmosphere surrounding her that one would expect of a person of this status.

“By any chance, are you heading to King Esvosbus’s place today?”(Hivodir)
“No, I have been called on by some official from above.”(Rasanasha)

Recently, she had been called on often by the officials who had attended the meeting at Deernook Fortress.
“Oh I see”, as Hivodir nodded in agreement. Rasanasha who was wearing a designer dress was more or less showing a wry smile.

“Well then, I am in a rush.”(Rasanasha)
“Ah, sorry for holding you up.”(Hivodir)
“Yuusuke sama too, will you excuse me? .”(Rasanasha)

Yuusuke and gang, saw her off as the figure of the palace carriage that came to pick her up disappears into the distance. Hivodir blown her a farewell kiss after whispering something.

“As I thought, she is playing the part of Blue Garden’s Queen.”(Hivodir)
“Wait What?”(Yuusuke)

Not knowing what he meant, Yuusuke tilted his head in confusion, while Hivodir was making a proud stroking gesture on his chin.

“Yuusuke, most likely you do not seem to know what kind of story it is about, let me explain the overview of that entire conversation which happened.”(Hivodir)
“Do as you like.”(Yuusuke)

According to Hivodir’s explanation, it seems that the expensive and beautiful dress was a request by the senior government officials who had attended the Blue Garden meeting, as her clientele is gradually increasing along with those who requested it, thus the wry smile at the end.

In short, her blue hair and eyes, during her service time of being a singing princess, the story of her resembling the Queen of Blue Garden.

“So it’s Imekura!”(Yuusuke)
(TL notes: sex establishment in which staff dress in costumes (schoolgirl, nurse, etc.))

All of the sudden, Yuusuke had plunged into the depths of the sex industry in this world.

Rasanasha had arrived at the private room in the residence of a certain earl who had summoned her. This house had a visit rate of once per month, singing princess who haven’t fulfil her duties here will sooner or later end up visiting.

Only a single luxurious canopy bed is placed in the center of the simple yet luxuriously decorative room. After the thick and heavy curtain fell and covered the window, the lord of the house was being called.

“It’s working time, nasha.”
“.....yes.”(Rasanasha)

“The instructions from the Parliament of god, to cause the darkness god captain from 亅 going into exile, this was handed to me by the ambassador that had arrived from Nossentes.”
“Exile, is it….?”(Rasanasha)

This particular Earl is a sympathizer of the Nossentus god parliament who is currently in Fonclanc, Rasanasha is a background supporter who uses the singing princess’s identity to gather intel and conciliatory, in order words a special operative.

This time the mission is about the exile of the darkness god captain to Nossentes instead.

“To have him exile, think bout it, isn’t this an unreasonable time due to his preferential environment?”(Rasanasha)
“Yes they know, that’s why it’s time for you to step in.”

While explaining the use of philandering on the Darkness god captain, the Earl sat on his bed. Rasanasha began to kneel in front of the Earl, as she placed her head on his lap. His boorish finger stroke and played with her smooth light blue hair.

“So you have also heard about the rumors.”
“Yes, it seems that such rumors are frequently heard.”

First, by using Rasanasha’s charm to captivate the darkness god captain into temptation. However, this has to be done with priority of maintaining an appropriate distance so that Princess Violet would not become suspicious about it.

Implicitly, within the conversation, an appeal, “open Nossentes to part of the genders”, not before long she would be finally able to return to her birthplace of Nossentes, saying that as she might be interested.

A hint that an aristocrat of Nossentes is proposing,”I don’t really want to go back as my little sister is here.” Showing a face full of sorrow, “My younger sister unlike me is just a normal unrelated girl, while I am a harlot” as it slip out of her mouth unintentionally.
The person holding onto the title of “younger sister” is currently a “Favourite” of the Darkness God Captain from the information she had gathered.

On the other hand, to work for the Earl who a high official of the palace regarding Gazzetta’s Military threat. As they were worshipping the same 4 major gods unlike Gazzetta, it created an atmosphere for them to cooperate, thus a goodwill ambassador was dispatched from Nossentes to tempt the Darkness God captain.

The mission for Rasanasha was to bind the heart of Darkness god captain and bring him to Nossentes, while it’s the Earl opportunity to send the darkness God corps away.

“Leave the methods to me, I will captivate him.”
“I got it.”

Her cheek was gentle stroke across the Earls lap as she looks up and look at the Earl. This signal normally is the cue of the end. It seems that the Earl had changed a little, the mood is filled with “stroking of a woman’s hair.”

“Also, this month’s portion. For the body maintenance.”
“Ah….yes, Thank you.”

The Earl took out a vial of deep blue of liquid, Rasanasha took it and put it into her bosom and left the mansion.

After purchasing the rings, Yuusuke headed towards the middle class district where the Sorzak’s store is at. Along the wall overlooking the commoner district, Rasanasha could be seen leaning on the handrail of the fence.

It seems that she was wearing a different kind of atmosphere compared to the morning, as she stared into the horizon.

“Ara, Hello.”(Rasanasha)
“Oh, Hi.”(Yuusuke)

As though he could naturally feel it, Yuusuke had been trying to hide his face as her natural smile seems to be directed at him.

“Shopping?”(Rasanasha)
“Yeah, well.”(Yuusuke)
A thin layer of makeup, a small trace of perfume that one could hardly notice, and she had almost no accessories on her.

Rather than a beauty whereby one feels difficult to approach, she had a feeling of a beautiful woman with natural cuteness. She had a naive smile which could calm and reassure any person. Yuusuke had such an impression towards Rasanasha.

As she was planning to head home, and since the direction that she was heading was the same as Sorzak’s store, she decided to take a stroll with him while having a little chat.

“But, don’t count on me for rumors, cause it seems like Yuusuke-sama is causing more terror.”
“I won’t ask what kind of rumors are those…..”(Yuusuke)

“Ufufu, just awhile ago it was actually the first time I met you, in my mind, I was all jumpy you know?”

Having the job as a singing princess, Rasanasha was prideful of her “charming appeal as a woman”, while there were rumors in the city about the Darkness God Captain being philandering, which have likely caused terror.

“Is it me, or are they avoiding eye contact.”(Yuusuke)
“Yeah~”

But at that rate, they continue their cheerful talks and reached Sorzak’s shop. Yuusuke was so engrossed in the talks that he felt that the time passed by so quickly.

“So then, I am heading off.”(Rasanasha)
“Yeah, see ya later.”(Yuusuke)

With a light nod, he saw off Rasanasha as she headed towards the other side of the street, as he turned around and rang the bell of the shop.

“Ding Dong” as the bell resounded, Sorzak immediately rushed out from the inner store counter.

“That lady just now! Isn’t she a singing princess?”(Sorzak)
“Ah, yes, but.”(Yuusuke)

“Did, did you buy her service?”(Sorzak)
“No of course not!”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke began to explain to Sorzak who was taken aback, he met her a while back at the park, and came here while chatting with her.

Sorzak's on the other hand had a very jealous look on his face. It seems that not even palace officials could lay their hands on a singing princess, they are only available to extremely high ranking officials, an ultra-luxury night singer, thus he envy from the side that Yuusuke was personally acquainted with one.

"Yet again the rumors gonna increase."(Sorzak)
"Come on gimme a break…."(Yuusuke)

For some reason, Sorzak was monotoning, while Yuusuke was tired with all the nonsense about being a playboy.

"Don't tell me you have already developed this kind of relationship with the princess~~and are making use of the street songs?"
"No not at all."(Yuusuke)

"Eh, Seriously? Not even the slightest? In any chance did the princess forbid you?(Sorzak)
"Nope, I am just not into those kind of things…."(Yuusuke)

Sorzak place his hands on his chin, while tilting his head to one side, after a while, he dropped his fist onto the palm of his hand with smile showing that he came to a conclusion.

"Ahh certainly to be interested only in children~~"(Sorzak)(TL note: wanted to put LOLICON)
"THAT's NOT IT!"(Yuusuke)

"A...are you interested in guys then~~?"(Sorzak)
"DEFINITELY NOT!"(Yuusuke)

Due to being extremely jealous of Yuusuke who had easily chatted with his longing of a singing princess, Sorzak was desperately trying to find fault.

Yuusuke returned to his room in the palace, and worked on the rings of divine arts in one go without rest. And yet again today, Violet had brought Sun as an attendant to play with his experimental products, she began to grumble as the day ended.

"Don't impulsively get entwine."(Violet)
"Awawa a certain significance, but it isn't that way."(Yuusuke)

The singing princess is said to be a symbol of luxury, it is said that many man would yearn to be wrapped in their sexual tenderness.

"Yuusuke-san are you not interested in women?"(Sun)
"You seem pretty anxious, but please stop, Sun."(Yuusuke)

Being normally interested, it appealed to Yuusuke.

"Is it because, you haven't even kissed Sun once?"(Violet)
"! Violet-sama! I am not particularly thinking about…."(Sun)
"No huh, no huh."(Violet)
"Ki ah please not ther….! Yan"(Sun) (TL note:tickling)

Like this and like that, Violet begin playing(tickling) with her whole body. To be allowed to be playfully playing like that at such age could only be found in this room throughout the palace.

Within the room 'Kyakya' noises could be heard, "What's happening!" one could not help but to contain their feeling to not look.

"Since it had turned to this point, why are you still shy, aren't you aware of your own feelings?"(Violet)
"Eh,arm, that…."(Sun)

Violet hug her from behind and whispered into her ears, causing Sun to become flustered and turn red. Although both of them were women, looking at the extreme skinship contact, Yuusuke sighed as he peels Violet away from her.

"Sun, your reaction is too obvious. Violet, don't tease her too much."(Yuusuke)

"....this fella is the number one most dense fella ever."(Violet)
"Ng?"

Whether he's deliberately unaware or not, that frank outspoken speech that just happened, Yuusuke tilted his head showing that he was wondering what had happened, Violet saw that are shrugged it off with a grumble.

"Even Sun will have many hardships."(Violet)
"....."

43. Medicine, doubts, and a peaceful night

"Oi, g'evening~" (Yuusuke)
"Oh, good evening Yuusuke-sama. We are meeting quite often these days." (Rasanasha)

A few days had gone by since the Darkness God Corps had resumed their usual patrols. Since then Yuusuke somehow came to encounter Rasanasha frequently during his patrols in the middle class and commoner districts.
This time however, they did not simply pass each other by on the street as before. As they were acquaintances now (or at least Yuusuke thought so), they stopped to exchange a few words.

"Are you working today as well?" (Rasanasha)
"Well, yeah. Have you heard anything interesting today?" (Yuusuke)

Rasanasha changed the topic towards her work by replying "Everything is as usual in Sanc Adiet, but I have heard that a new brothel was opened in Nossentes." To Yuusuke, Rasanasha's shop looked to be a kind of a massage house, the kind of industry that he had no experience with. (T.N. katakana read [Soapland] (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soapland)

"Nossentes, eh?" (Yuusuke)
"To tell the truth, I come from Patrutia Nost myself." (Rasanasha)

Rasanasha's story caught Yuusuke's interest so he continued listening to the woman speaking about her family without interrupting her. She spoke of having a younger sister, who was a simple girl back at her birthplace, about how her sister knew about her occupation (singing princess), and about how they argued about it on the rare occasions that she returned home.

"She is probably worried about her older sister." (Yuusuke)
"I think so as well" (Rasanasha)

["I should not ask why she took on this job,"] thought Yuusuke to himself as he was enjoying the conversation. Suddenly Rasanasha's body shuddered. She swayed as if she was drowsy and clutched an area around her stomach.

"Ah… this, I am sorry, give me a moment." (Rasanasha)

As she said that, she turned her back towards Yuusuke, took a bottle of medicine from her purse, and drank a little bit of it. Afterwards she used healing art on the area that she felt pain.

["And I drank the medicine this morning too… The spasms seem to be becoming more frequent lately…"] (Rasanasha)

Rasanasha was very worried about this, but after feeling the effect of the healing art starting to spread, she managed to calm down a little bit.

"Are you alright? Is something wrong?" (Yuusuke)
"No, I mean… it's something I have had for a long time." (Rasanasha)

Rasanasha tried to evade the question, fearing that Yuusuke would lose interest in her after learning of her chronic disease. However Yuusuke was genuinely worried for his acquaintance thus he offered to introduce her to an exceptional healer that he knew.

"His healing skills are the real deal. Maybe you have heard of him as well, his name is Zeshald." (Yuusuke)
"Ah, I know of him. He is the former royal divine arts instructor, right?" (Rasanasha)

Worried about the more frequent spasms, and thinking that this might be a chance to get closer to Yuusuke, Rasanasha accepted Yuusuke's offer and asked to be examined by Zeshald.

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The next day Rasanasha came to the palace. Yuusuke talked the matter over with Violet the night before so the preparations to go to Zeshald's place were already complete. All that was left for the woman and the members of the Darkness God Corps was to board the palace knight's carriage.

It was unheard of for a palace knight corps to employ the carriage to escort a singing princess, moreover it was done on a personal whim. Thus members from other knight's corps as well as other people of higher status, who had descended to the carriage floor, were staring at the members of the Darkness God Corps with envious eyes.

At first Violet was shocked, when Yuusuke requested to take a singing princess to Rufk, but after hearing about Rasanasha's situation she finally gave her consent. Afterwards she asked for Sun's consent and left with her with Yuusuke saying "I'll leave her to you."
She suspected that there was something else hidden beneath that woman's reasons. For a singing princess,

becoming sick would greatly affect her reputation. Even if she said that her illness was not contagious, for someone such as a singing princess, they could not avoid the looks of suspicion and contempt of other people.

“We’re good to go guys, don’t forget to keep this a secret, okay?” (Rasanasha?)
“Hahaha, leave the cover up for me!” (Violet)
“Aaah… I also wanted to go with them…” (Hivodir)

Krielov stared at the three people with strange expressions on their faces. Meanwhile, he was considering Violet’s actions. Her actions were different from the usual princess’ tantrums, whose main purpose was to tease someone.

[“Princess will do the cover up by herself, eh?… This is child’s play, so the decision was easy, however…”] (Krielov)

Krielov was wondering of whether or not this had shown some sort of growth within the princess, thus the amount of wrinkles on his forehead was constantly changing.

***

The carriage with the party was riding on the highway that stretched towards the direction of their destination. The tension inside the vehicle was high, as Aisha was riding in the same carriage as a singing princess, a type of person she would never look at, much less speak to. Before boarding, Fonke looked at Aisha and blurted out “It would be perfect if she became a member afterwards,” and every now and then he would steal glances at the woman while pretending to concentrate on the wind arts that were necessary to run the carriage.

Vermeer was clutching the reins, not as dissatisfied as one might have expected him to be, and Shaheed was silently watching the tense atmosphere as it had become a habit of his by now. Aisha and Isotta were the most nervous of the bunch, stealing quick glances at their unexpected companion. Meanwhile, Yuusuke and Sun were engaged in friendly chatter with Rasanasha.

“The two of you seem to have complete trust in Zeshald—“ (Rasanasha)
“Yes, teacher is a very good person.” (Sun)
“He might be mischievous at times, but he gives off the feeling of a gentle grandfather.” (Yuusuke)

However, the person himself was not in any way similar to the “gentle grandfather”. When the relations with the neighboring country of Blue Garden deteriorated, he pretended to betray Fonclanc and traveled to the enemy country. He was a “man of valor” who had even gained the queen’s trust, formed a group to oppose the anti-Fonclanc faction, and destroyed it from within. And he did all of this alone.

A count had warned her “to not lower her guard” when she serviced him the other day. Although she managed to hide it from the two companions, she was feeling some tension regarding the meeting with Zeshald and the unavoidable questions that she would have to answer.

***

“Oh, Yuusuke, and Sun.” (Zeshald)
“I’m home, teacher.” (Sun)
“Heiyo~” (Yuusuke)

When the Darkness God Corps party reached Rufk village, the sun was already setting. Guards, stationed at the village, were notified in advance (through the use of wind arts) about the upcoming visitors, so Zeshald seemed to have finished his preparations for the medical examination.
Due to the recent attacks, makeshift barracks were built in the village and a simple fortress like structure was constructed within the area, surrounded by a protective trench. All the defenses were similar to what was usually used against armed groups.

“Ah, Belushya-san.” (Sun)

Belushya was tending the field, it seemed that she had successfully taken over Sun’s usual tasks. This was a new kind of experience for Belushya – instead of taking lives to survive, she would now tend for them, harvest what she had grown, and plant the seeds again.

Sun was looking at the fields and talking with Belushya who, for some unknown reason, was wearing a maid uniform. Vermeer and the rest of the corps turned towards the temporary barracks while Fonke took Rasanasha’s luggage in an attempt to tag along with Yuusuke. By the way, Bahana had become the center of attention within the temporary barracks because everyone was captivated by her cooking.

“It’s unfair for captain alone to g—“ (Fonke)

Aisha stepped on Fonke’s foot. Yuusuke sighed at the sight of his quarreling subordinates.

“That guy, he will go anywhere when his precious singing princesses are involved.” (Aisha)
“Ufufu, our songs are only used to comfort the partner overnight. The magic is gone, once things become serious.” (Rasanasha)

Thinking that this had somehow added fuel to the fire, Yuusuke escorted Rasanasha to Zeshald’s house.

“You seem to be doing fine.” (Yuusuke)
“I can say the same about you.” (Zeshald)

Having arrived at the guest room which had been transformed into an examination room, Zeshald sat on the chair, directing the rest of the group to sit on the sofa, and then began to activate his divine arts. He used his healing arts to examine the inside of Rasanasha’s body, trying to find the source of her illness.

“Hmm, this seems to be rot disease. (朽病)” (Zeshald)
“… …Yes.” (Rasanasha)

In a gloomy mood Rasanasha nodded to Zeshald’s confirmation. Rasanasha’s illness was [Rot disease]. Although the illness itself was not too common, it usually caused tumors to develop and spread within one’s body. It was an illness that caused a range of other complications and finally led to the person’s demise.
Healing arts could alleviate some of the symptoms, but a moderately strong art was needed in order to do so. It was also said that complete recovery from this illness was not possible.

[“It looks similar to cancer…”] (Yuusuke)

“Hmm… it seems to be quite advanced… Did you bring the adjuvant medicine?” (Zeshald)
“Ah, yes… Here it is.” (Rasanasha)

Zeshald took a sip from the medicine bottle that Rasanasha gave him and drank a little bit of it, sloshing the liquid within his mouth. Using healing arts along with adjuvant medicine could greatly reduce the rate at which the rot illness spread within the body.
Being a water arts user herself, Rasanasha was able to feel the tumor in her body by herself. However, until yesterday she thought it to be much smaller.

["As expected of the former royal divine arts instructor,"] thought the women, admiring Zeshald's skills.

"Were you using this medicine yesterday?" (Zeshald)
"Yes, that's right." (Rasanasha)

Since Yuusuke saw Rasanasha holding the same medicine yesterday, he had inquired about it. It seemed to be a very expensive medicine that was only available in Nossentes. It was nearly impossible to obtain it here in Fonclanc as it was rarely imported by traders. This was because it was difficult to obtain as the quantity available was always insufficient. Rasanasha's bottle was already half empty when Yuusuke asked to take a look at it.

"Hmm, let me see…" (Yuusuke)

Zeshald silently watched over Yuusuke, who was examining the item in his customization menu. Rasanasha was lost at how quickly the focus of the room shifted to Yuusuke and her eyes were jumping between the two men.
Yuusuke confirmed the status of the medicine.

"It belongs to the healing enchantment type and does not bring out an immediate effect." (Yuusuke)
"You can customize that as well?" (Zeshald)
"Well, in theory… But this seems to be quite a strong medicine." (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke hinted that this was a strong medicine that had a heavy impact on the patient's body, so tampering with it bore some risks. This made Zeshald think what effects could such a customized medicine, coupled with healing arts of his level, bring out.

"Since the production method is held secret by Nossentes, wouldn't it be good to produce a better medicine that helped the ill?" (Zeshald)

Because he felt that he could assure the patient's safety, Zeshald urged Yuusuke to take a go at customizing the medicine. Yuusuke groaned, while thinking. He was troubled that he could not obtain a sufficient amount that one would want, considering that the medicine was not available in Fonclanc.

["There are probably more people that are suffering from this too. Should I go to Nossentes to procure more of this medicine?"] (Yuusuke)

"It seems that the quickest way will be for me to go and buy the medicine myself." (Yuusuke)
"Mhm, there will also be other useful medicine sold there. It would be best if you confirmed the usefulness yourself." (Zeshald)

Unable to comprehend their conversation, Rasanasha was only staring at them, waiting for whatever conclusion would come out of the discussion.

“Then I will consult with Violet about it. Maybe I can turn this into an official business trip to Nossentes.” (Yuusuke)

Rasanasha was shocked by the sudden reason for traveling to Nossentes. And then a doubt appeared within her mind.

[“Maybe Yuusuke-sama is actually a womanizer as the rumors say?”]

That timid looking transmission type wind arts user, who her superior had forced himself on, seemed to be looking at him with something more than only respect in her eyes. The artless girl, who for some reason was living in the palace, also not only held faith in Yuusuke but also seemed to hold feelings for him.

In any case, she was able to create a reason for Yuusuke to travel to Nossentes. She had to report it if she managed to return to the city. Thus, Rasanasha had made a mental note of today’s events, and her doubts about the intel of the personality of the captain of the Darkness God Corps that she was provided with.

***

That night—

After eating their supper, Yuusuke and Sun, Zeshald and Belushya were together, enjoying the tea, thus spending the evening together. Rasanasha’s situation seemed to be serious, so she was made to rest in the guest room.
Zeshald was telling Yuusuke various pieces of information about Nossentes. Having come upon a part of the conversation where he could interrupt the topic, Yuusuke asked a question that was bothering him for some time.

“By the way, why the maid uniform?” said Yuusuke, pointing at Belushya’s uniform. One eye hidden by her short blue hair, Belushya gave Yuusuke a faint answer in a barely audible voice.

“… Rood is– He (T.N. Zeshald) said that it looks better this way.” (Belushya)

Finishing her reply, Belushya looked at Zeshald.

“Rood?”
“Nh… well that is a name of a pet I had when I was young.” (Zeshald)

For a moment, everyone in the room froze. Sun started murmuring something to herself while Yuusuke tried to keep a calm demeanor.

“You are calling her by a pet name?…” (Yuusuke)
“What are you doing sensei?” (Sun)

“Hohoho” (Zeshald)
“… … (The tea is delicious.)” (Belushya) (T.N. brackets used here by the author)

Thus it was a peaceful evening indeed.

44. Hero's irony

"Many thanks for everything. You really made me feel much more at ease." (Rasanasha)
nods "If your condition worsens, come see me anytime." (??)

Yuusuke and co. departed from Rufk early in the morning and managed to return to Sanc Adiet just before noon.
Rasanasha had separated from the group before they arrived at palace, however Fonke, definitely trying to get close to the nightsinger, offered to escort the woman back to her house. Despite his eagerness, he had been promptly returned to the horse handler's seat by Vermeer.
Having obtained their captain's permission, Fonke and Vermeer took the carriage and drove Rasanasha home, while the other members had returned to the knights' resting room. The captain himself walked towards Violet's room to report to her.

"Basically, you want to travel to Nossentes to procure the medicine?" (Violet)
"Mhm." (Yuusuke)

Violet was pondering about Yuusuke's report and his suggestion to travel to Nossentes, only showing a subtle expression on her face.
Yuusuke hung his head low, thinking that such a trip was out of the question after all. However, Krielov informed Yuusuke that the Darkness God Corps are being considered for a new mission of becoming good will ambassadors in Nossentes while delivering the king's personal letter to that country.

"Ambassador?! But… I have no experience whatsoever with these duties that have such serious political implications."
"Weell, we will just have to appoint a suitable person to be the ambassador, so there should be no problems. Isn't that right, Krielov!" (Violet)

Thinking that Violet had made this choice to preserve the face of the Darkness God Corps, Krielov nodded, showing his agreement while admiring the princess deep in his heart. While he was aware of his role, this cooperation between her and Yuusuke was one of those cases of her sharp insight that Violet sometimes showed.

"However, something is bothering me…" (Violet)
"?" (Yuusuke)

Violet seemed to be reluctant to accept Yuusuke's plan. She could understand Yuusuke's reason of procuring medicine for the rot disease, however there was something that had been bothering her, which she could not seem to be able to put into words.

"I don't know how to say this, it seems to me that there is more to all of this." (Violet)
"Is that something like woman's intuition? Or are you perhaps jealous of Rasanasha-san?" (Yuusuke)

Bashing Yuusuke's head with the flying saucer for making fun of her, Violet was thinking whether sending Yuusuke to Nossentes was a good idea. After all, Nossentes was suspected of being the puppet master behind the latest attacks.

"By the way, Yuusuke's mansion should be finished tomorrow, right?" (Violet)

Violet had procured a permit for Yuusuke to build a mansion so that he would be able to provide Sun with her new home. It also seemed that she managed to procure some of the required funds as well.
At the time when the transfer of the ownership of the mansion was to be completed, the negotiations for the appointment of the ambassador should also be done, Krielov was also thinking about the schedule of important events.

“Wouldn’t it be proper to present some kind of reward to the construction workers?” (Yuusuke)
“If you really want to, do it. However, how about you get them some aged strong liquor?” (Violet?)

“That’s a good idea!” replied Yuusuke and immediately left to buy the said alcohol in town.

***

Late at night, avoiding bystanders as much as she could, Rasanasha visited the count’s house. She reported that, with her illness as the main reason, she had achieved their main objective. The count hinted that his attempt at persuading the king to consider the Darkness God Corps for the ambassador duties was also successful.

“Good, the first stage seems to be a huge success.” (Count)

The count also informed Rasanasha of her duties for the next step. Before the Darkness God Corps were announced as the escort for the good-will ambassador, she was to head to the Nossentes villa (別荘) and tell her younger sister about the continuation of the mission. (T.N. No idea as of yet on what this villa is supposed to be.)

“I expect you to continue to excel at your duties.” (Count)

Princess Violet’s influence could not reach beyond Fonclanc. Count’s orders were clear, the “sisters” are to seduce Yuusuke with their skills. Rasanasha showed a slightly disturbed face, thinking [“have I misjudged the character of the captain of the Darkness God Corps before?”]

“Rasanasha, what kind of person do you see yourself as?” (Count)
“Eh? Me? I am a singing princess …” (Rasanasha)
“That’s right, you were granted this position by me. You are my spy.“ (Count)
“…Yes.” (Rasanasha)

Count continued reading the report. He, not Rasanasha, was amongst those that made decisions, thus he continued admonishing Rasanasha to remain faithful to her orders.

“Do you understand? We don’t need your opinion. Just do your part, carry out the orders and gather the information. When I will give you the order, start spreading the rumors.” (Count)
“Fo-forgive me, I overstepped my duties.” (Rasanasha)
“You are forgiven. However, your skill of the trade is applaudable. For a singing princess to lead him around like that…” (Count)

She caused Yuusuke to worry by using her illness and even made him use his connections with Zeshald. Furthermore, she made him travel to Nossentes to procure the expensive medicine for the good of everyone who might have the same disease in the country. To make Yuusuke want to go to the other kingdom for such a humane reason required truly astounding skill.

“To be able to rouse his sympathy like that. You are better than I expected.” (Count)

Count thought that the rumors about Yuusuke seducing women were mostly truth, and the person himself would vanish should more rumors like that were to spread.

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The next day Yuusuke took Sun along to see the completed mansion. The two of them had just arrived at the entrance of their mansion in the upper class district.

The mansion was a three story building that had nearly thirty rooms, including kitchens, servant rooms, guest rooms, and the like. The mansion grounds also included stables, and a carriage shed, wide enough for one to ride on horseback.

“Isn’t this a little too big?” (Yuusuke)
“Oh? Are you seeing your mansion for the first time, Yuusuke-san?” (Sun)

It seems that Sun was accustomed to the magnanimity as she had seen the progress of the construction on some occasions when she was being dragged around by Violet, whenever the princess decided to ride around the district in her carriage. Because Yuusuke’s duties usually had him working in the lower class districts, it was his first time seeing the place since he decided to request for a mansion.

“Still… looking at it again, it sure is big, eh?” (Sun)
“It sure is. How about we go and check the inside of the building for now?” (Yuusuke)

As the two of them were approaching the gate, the guards saluted Yuusuke. The guards showed slightly perplexed expression on their faces, however Yuusuke did not pay too much attention to them.
Having received a lot of exceptions and indulgences, Yuusuke got used to being treated with questioning and perplexed looks by others. After walking for a bit, they arrived at the huge door that was the main entrance to their mansion. After having entered the mansion, servants, who were lined up at the main hall, greeted them in unison.

“Welcome home, master-sama” (Servants)
“Eh!” (Yuusuke) (T.N. Yuusuke was something like http://goo.gl/gZ78Pg)
“Ah?!” (Sun?)
“No, it’s nothing.” (Yuusuke)

Being called a [“master”], made Yuusuke’s back itch, but thinking back, such a development was inevitable. By the way, in addition to the gatekeepers and the servants, Yuusuke now also had a private coach driver, and guards, tasked with the management of the mansion. This extravagance was truly befitting of someone from a distinguished family.
Making a mental note to request the staff to change the way they address him, Yuusuke started to look around the mansion. Corridors stretched to both sides and twin staircases could be seen at the back of the hall. There were no sculptures, paintings or other works of art that usually adorned the walls of such buildings and the ornaments were simplistic, but the atmosphere in the hall was by no means untasteful. Although unable to calm down because of the retro style that the hall gave off, Yuusuke felt that the decorations were “just right”.

“Hmm…”

Suddenly seeing perplexed looks on the servant's faces, Yuusuke followed their eyes. They were all looking at Sun like some sort of unwanted object.
Apparently, some servants could not comprehend the fact that an artless would be living in the mansion that they were serving in. They started whispering amongst themselves (not trying to hide it) that the rumor about the captain of the Darkness God Corps having an artless woman as a concubine might indeed be true.

Although they (Yuusuke and Sun) had some sort of relation to Zeshald, in the eyes of the servants, a common artless girl living in the palace was unacceptable.
Nonetheless, the two of them were favorites of the princess and on top of that he was being hailed as a hero and was captain of the Darkness God Corps. None of the castle knights dared to openly oppose him because of the [rings of divine arts] that he provided to members of every knight corps. Therefore, naturally there were people whom wanted to take revenge on him.

Most of the staff was employed from outside of the palace so they were not used to serving Sun as opposed to the palace servants. Their frankness could almost be considered harassment.

Artless people were more common nowadays, their figures could be seen performing cleaning duties around the middle class district. Although they could walk around nearly the entire city under the watch of their supervisors, it did not mean that the schisms of the caste system had been closed. That could also be said about the convictions that each person carried within their hearts.
As far as common divine arts users were concerned, the artless were not even within the caste system.

The palace officials that were responsible for personnel selection thought that Sun's presence in the palace was barely on a whim of their princess and that her status was nothing more than princess's pet. They had no idea about (could not comprehend) the mutual friendship that these two girls shared.

Thus, the palace officials that harbored dissatisfaction towards Yuusuke, selected personnel who did not know of the artless girl in the palace and had not briefed them of the situation before hand. They expected that these common divine art users would show the artless girl her place in this world.

The Servants' looks had held doubts, such as ["Why is an artless in such a place?"] Besides they were well aware of Sun's body becoming stiff.
Originally terrified by the power of the divine arts users, Sun's heart quickly shrank under the incomprehensible looks of the servants. The fact that Yuusuke might soon leave for Nossentes, leaving her to live in this house all alone, did not help to alleviate her anxiousness.

Oblivious to the plot behind all this, Yuusuke finally understood the perplexed looks of the gate guards and servants faces. It was still too early to think about any relations between the divine arts users and the artless.

"Uhm…. Head butler-san?" (Yuusuke)
"Please call me Zafys, master." (Zafease/Zafys)
"Mmm… Okay, Zafys." (Yuusuke)
"Yes master, what is your request?" (Zafys)

Besides giving orders to the head butler, Yuusuke also ordered to call the palace guards inside. When every person within the mansion grounds had gathered inside, Yuusuke had addressed them with an introductory speech. However, it was clear that he had to reconsider on what he should say during his speech.

“Sun is a precious …friend, which Zeshald has put in my care. She is like a family to me.“
“I know some of you are prejudiced towards artless. I am not blaming you for that. However, this prejudice will not be tolerated in my house.”
“Such negativity is not beneficial to either party. Those that do not recognize Sun as a member of this house, speak out now.”

Said Yuusuke as he greeted the servants and the guards of his new house. Grabbing onto the hem of the Darkness God Corps uniform, and her shoulders faintly shivering, Sun was being lightly embraced by the captain of the corps. Servants and guards paled, seeing the anger of the hero of Gearhawk and Deernook. The silence of the grave fell upon the hall.

“Ah—So it’s like that… Then I hope there will be no more discussions regarding this.”

Seeing his servant’s heads bowed down in shame, Yuusuke scratched his head, thinking he was a bit too harsh, and loosened his tone.

“Let me correct myself, I will be awaiting those that have something to say this afternoon here in the mansion. Everyone dismissed.”

Having finished his talk he felt like a manager or CEO introducing themselves to the new employees. Afterwards, Yuusuke invited Sun to take a trip around the mansion with him. The Head butler rushed to him in order to guide him around the house, but Yuusuke interrupted him. Waving his hand, and ordered to “ascertain the determination of the other servants.” As he left the room, he held eye contact with all of the servants that he passed on his way.

Head butler silently nodded his head, abiding by the master’s orders.

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“Still, this hidden room is splendid. Look here.” (Yuusuke)

Yuusuke inspected the mansion using his customization powers. There was no way that such a hidden passage and a hidden room, which were not present in the original plan of the house, would escape his notice. Yuusuke properly closed these “holes” with his customization power, while adding a little trap of his own.

“… Uhm, Yuusuke-san?”
“Mh? Have you calmed down a little bit?”
“Yes… Thank you.”
“Don’t worry. Good, now let’s go take a look at the second floor.”

Yuusuke and Sun held hands the entire time they were walking around the mansion.

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In the end, none of the servants left the mansion.

45. Nossentes

The next morning, Yuusuke did a final check on his luggage which he had finished packing for the trip last night. A change of clothes, different types of fabric, which he uses as material for customization in preparations for wear and tear, and different types of food.

The mission to Nossentes will only officially begin after a briefing on the details in the palace.

Due to the small uproar yesterday, the servants of the house began to treat Sun with equal respect as Yuusuke. They also began to put their professionalism to work in serving the residents of the mansion. Yuusuke who noticed this, nodded as he said, ”Now I can leave for Nossentes with peace of mind.”

“Sun, I have something I would like you to do in my absence.”(Yuusuke)
“Yes? What is it?”(Sun)

Yuusuke entrusted Sun a “Ring of Wind Arts”, which he then told her to give to the vice-captain of the Wind Art Corps 4 days later. Although he could have asked Violet to do it, but knowing her temperament, some troublesome situations might occur.

In order to avoid an unnecessary uproar, Yuusuke decided to entrust it to Sun as she was already known within the palace.

“Well then, I’ll be back as soon as possible.”(Yuusuke)
“See you later, Yuusuke-san.”(Sun)

Sun gently released her hands from Yuusuke’s arm. It had already become a usual move for Sun to do this gesture as a sort of good luck charm whenever he went out, ‘Will Yuusuke have any reaction to it?’ As she was thinking about it, Yuusuke gently stroked her white hair.
Sun who was surprised by the moment was blinking intensively, as her cheeks became flushed in red, and she sent a fluffy smile to Yuusuke.

Yuusuke began descending from the foyer to the centre hall, his butler and 2 other servants stood in front of the door as they delivered their farewells to send off their master.

“Take care of Sun in my absence.”(Yuusuke)
“Affirmative* By your will. Understood.”(Butler)(TL notes: super respected way 「畏まりまして御座います」)

Yuusuke boarded onto his personal carriage which was parked alongside the entrance, and gave his final instructions to his butler who then returned to the mansion.

“Now, here’s the overview of the mission.”

In the upper floors of Volance Palace, the Darkness God Corps were officially bestowed with a personal handwritten letter. That was to be delivered to Nossentes's Capital, Patrucia Nost, with the ambassadors of Fonclanc. They will then stay there for several days before returning home.

Officially, the Darkness God Corps was to carry King Esvosbus's personal letter, but in truth they were there to be the bodyguards of the ambassadors.

"Normally, a convoy consisting of different palace knights were to be organized and formed, these people would be carefully selected to form the group for a diplomatic mission, but…."

Currently, Nossentes and Gazzetta are in a cold war, and it is only at this period of time that they had to prioritize this and made a quick decision, as Krielov explained the situation regarding the overview of the mission. Before embarking on the main journey, they will go towards a small town south of Sanc Adiet, where they will spend the night.

On the first day of the journey (Day +1), they will head towards a port city in the vicinity of the Moon Mirror Lake which the journey should take an entire day, and after that they will reside there for a night. The following day (Day +2), they will be boarding a boat to cross the lake and land on the peninsula of Trent Rietta, and then they will be on foot from there to the middle of the peninsula, where they will set up camp.

On the third day (Day +3), they will continue to advance through the other half of the peninsula until they reach the south vicinity of the border, there they will join up with a convoy that is scheduled to be dispatched from Nossentes. On the last day (Day +4), they will board the coach which will bring them to their final destination, Patrucia Nost.

If everything went according to plan, they will enter the capital of Nossentes in the early afternoon of the 4th day.

"Note that, in the peninsula of Trent Rietta there might be attacks from magical beasts, so please take the necessary precautions."(Krielov)
"I haven't experienced any encounter with a magical beast before, is there any plans to deal with them?"(Yuusuke)
"They are just the basic dangerous wild animals which shouldn't cause a huge problem."(Vermeer)

These magical beasts appeared to have evolved from carnivorous animals which had eaten divine arts users. They inherit the divine arts ability from the victims, causing these creatures to mutate. As they evolve, they attune to the same type of divine arts as their victims had. After which, they have a tendency to target humans with the same type of divine arts as them.

If anyone amongst them is a target of an attack, they would have an easy time to judge and repel the attack without anyone getting injured.

Amongst the magical beast chain, there are those that evolve into carnivorous type and the others which for some reason had adopted to become a herbivore, a plant type magical beast. Herbivorous beasts rarely attacks humans, thus they are normally left alone as they don't seem to be dangerous.

"The plant type magical beast are generally weak against fire, thus they hardly leave the forest. So when we are camping, as long as we keep the fire up around the forest outskirts we should be fine."(Vermeer)
"I see."(Yuusuke)

It seems that Vermeer and the others had experience with handling these magical beasts. Although, along the way, we have to pay attention to any kind of dangerous attacks that could be made by armed groups such as bandits.

"Now then, may the fortunes of war bless you on the success of the mission."(Krielov)
"Don't do anything unreasonable. Everyone must come back safely."(Violet)

Violet prayed for the safety of everyone as the Darkness God Corps began their journey from Sanc Adiet to the capital of Nossentes.

The darkness god corps and the ambassadors had arrived at their first destination, the small town in the south, around the evening. By using today's short trip they have conditioned themselves for tomorrow's long journey.

In order for the 3 ambassadors to handle the long trip, 2 to 3 plans were created before the final confirmation. After which, they headed back to the inn to rest their body in preparation for the next day's journey.

"Isotta"(Yuusuke)
"Ah, Captain…."(Isotta)
"Sending today's report?"(Yuusuke)
"Yes"(Isotta)

Isotta was currently concentrating on a spacious road while facing towards the direction of Sanc Adiet, using her transmission wind arts to report that nothing major had happened for the day. For those who are on a mission which requires constant moving, (e.g. scouting) regular contact through wind art transmissions played a crucial role.

"I, always….wanted to go on a mission like this, this is my first time."
"Me too."
"Ah...so, we're the same…"

The members of the Darkness God Corps knew that Yuusuke did not come from some artless village in some distant land that Zeshald declared when he brought him along to Fonclanc. They knew that Yuusuke was a being summoned from another world to become the evil god.

That said, “What is an evil god in the first place?”, even the person himself doesn’t have a clue.

“Captain…..is neither wicked nor evil.”(Isotta)
“Awawawa, the evil god is most probably a kind of nickname/tag, I don’t think that’s a reason to become really evil you know?”(Yuusuke)

Yuusuke did not believe himself to be the “Evil God of Calamity” that is being rumored on the streets. By joining up the pieces of information he gained from the conversation he had with Shinha, he came to a conclusion that, ‘There wasn’t such a key to start the revolution as the evil god.’

“Well, I wonder if it would have been better to go to Shinha’s place to see if there is truth in Shinha’s statments.”(Yuusuke)
“...Captain, erm….someday, you will eventually go to Gazzetta?”(Isotta)
“Eventually I will head there. Even if I go, I might not stay there you know?”(Yuusuke)

As Yuusuke stated that he wanted to find his purpose in this present world, Isotta began to turn away with an uneasy look on her face.

“But, Captain... would you become an ally of Gazzetta? You are irreplaceable to us….you know?”(Isotta)
“I will consider my options when the time comes.”(Yuusuke)
“Please answer it seriously.”(Isotta)

Hearing Yuusuke’s answer without any hesitation, Isotta feared that it would become a hostile relationship in the future, thus she tried to question and hound Yuusuke for his true thoughts. Seeing how Isotta reacted to it, Yuusuke declared to her in a soothing voice.

“As long as I am myself, I would never become your enemies. So have peace of mind.”(Yuusuke)
“....okay.”(Isotta)

Isotta replied as she made a small nod.

The next morning, the Darkness God Corps whom had started the day early were proceeding smoothly on the highway that cut through the woods. They then arrived at a fork in the road in the vicinity of Blue garden’s territory where they had their lunch break. The distance from here to the port city was roughly about a round trip from Sanc Adiet to Rufk.

“If we continue moving at this speed, we should arrive at the destination in the evening.”(Vermeer)
“Understood, thanks for the hard work. Everyone take some rest before we start moving again.”(Yuusuke)
“U~issu”(Fonke)
“Captain, the food is ready.”(Aisha?)

The horse drawn carriage was parked along the side of the road, the ambassador joined in with them and huddled in a circle as they began to stuff their face full with simple food. If one were to peek and look into the forest for just a bit, they could find natural growing rara fruits. With an abundance like that, it is unlikely that one could starve to death along the desolate lands of Kalticio.

“Will magical beasts appear in this location?”
“The carnivorous magical beasts around Fonclanc have been hunted almost into extinction, but if one were to enter deep in the forest there should still be remnants of plant type beasts.”

It is generally safe around the areas of the highway. Due to the sealing of the border the other time, in order to ensure the safety of the merchants who were traveling on the detour highway route, the subduing of magical beast around the highway was implemented. As a result these magical beasts had disappeared from the area.

In replacement of the beasts, bandits have started to infest the area.

“These armed groups are definitely more dangerous than the magical beast.”
“Ain’t that ironic.”

After the extermination of these magical beasts, it led to the current dangerous scenario. And in some sense, Fonclanc had learnt a valuable lesson, it’s not good to overdo things.

Since the ancient times, the artless have expressed an understanding, to preserve and balance the eco-system, but as eras changed to a more flexible attitude, those who know about these relationships might no longer exist.

After the break, they began to set off towards the port city. The sun began to set as they came out of the forest. On the right side of the horse-drawn carriage was the Moon Mirror Lake, they rode on for another 3 hours, and as they began to get closer to the port city, they could see its reflection shimmering on the surface of the lake from a distance.

Alighting in front of a large inn which overlooked the pier, people unloading their catch of the day could be seen. They each began splitting the workload of unloading their own luggage from the carriage. As they will

be crossing the lake by boat tomorrow, even though it's just a short pleasure walk from the inn, they still had to make sure that everyone is responsible for their own luggage.

"Tonight we will be spending the night here, tomorrow we will finally be entering the neighbouring country."

Yuusuke muttered to himself as he looked at the reflection of Kaltcio's moon on the dark surface of the lake, while standing beside Isotta who was making her daily report using transmission wind arts.